

A MANUAL OF BUDDHISM

NARADA MAHA THERA

A Manual Of Buddhism

by
Narada Thera



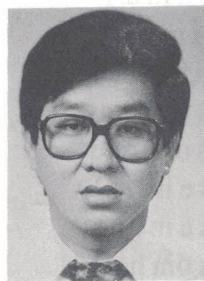
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“SABBA DĀNAṂ DHAMMA DĀNAṂ JINĀTI”
(THE GIFT OF TRUTH EXCELS ALL OTHER GIFTS.)



Mr. Koh Liang Kwee



Mr. Koh Mui Kiat

This book **“Manual of Buddhism”**
is sponsored by

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In Loving Memory

of the late **Mr. Koh Liang Kwee,**

and the late **Mr. Koh Mui Kiat.**

May the late **Mr. Koh Liang Kwee,**

and the late **Mr. Koh Mui Kiat**

achieve Eternal bliss through the merit accruing to them
from the sponsorship of this book.

May the families of the sponsors be blessed and
may all of them be happy, healthy, long-lived and prosperous.

Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero

27.11.989

THE PĀLI ALPHABET

PRONUNCIATION OF LETTERS

a as u in *but*
ā as a in *art*
i as i in *pin*
ī as i in *machine*
u as u in *put*
ū as u in *rule*
e as e in *ten*
ē as a in *fate*
o as o in *hot*
ō as o in *note*
k as k in *key*
g as g in *get*
ṇ as ng in *ring*
c as ch in *rich*
j as j in *jug*

ñ as gn in *Signor*
ṭ as t in *not*
ḍ as d in *hid*
ṇ as n in *hint*
p as p in *lip*
b as b in *rib*
m as m in *him*
y as y in *yard*
r as r in *rat*
l as l in *sell*
v as v in *vile*
s as s in *sit*
h as h in *hut*
ḷ as l in *felt*
ṁ as ng in *sing*

The vowels “e” and “o” are always long, except when followed by a double consonant e.g. *ettha*, *oṭṭha*.

There is no difference between the pronunciation of “*ṇ*” and “*ṁ*”. The former never stands at the end, but is always followed by a consonant of its group.

The dentals “t” and “d” are pronounced with the tip of the tongue placed against the front upper teeth.

The aspirates “kh”, “gh”, “**ṭh**”, “**ḍh**”, “th”, “dh”, “ph”, “bh” are pronounced with the “h” sound immediately following, as in blockhead, pighead, cathead, loghead, etc., where the “h” in each is combined with the preceding consonant in pronunciation.

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CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

THE BIRTH

ON the full-moon day of May¹ in the year 623 B.C.,² there was born, in the **Lumbini Park**³ at **Kapilavatthu**,⁴ on the borders of Nepal, a noble Prince of the aristocratic **Sākya** clan. His father was King **Suddhodana**⁵ and his mother Queen **Mahā Māyā**. Seven days after the birth of the child, the mother died and **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami**, her younger sister who was also married to King **Suddhodana**, became his foster mother.

Great were the rejoicings of the people over the birth of this illustrious prince. A certain ascetic, named Asita, also known as **Kāladevala**, was particularly pleased to hear this happy news and being a tutor of the King, visited the palace to see the royal baby. The overjoyed King brought the child to pay him due reverence, but, to the surprise of all, his feet turned and planted themselves in the matted locks of the ascetic. Instantly, the ascetic rose from his seat and foreseeing the child's future greatness, saluted him with joined hands. When he thus honoured him, the royal father, too, saluted him in the same way.

The great ascetic at first smiled and then was sad. Questioned as to his mixed feelings, he replied that he smiled because the Prince would eventually become a Buddha; and that he was sad because he, owing to his prior death and rebirth in a Formless Plane (**Arūpaloka**)⁶, could not benefit by the superior wisdom of the Enlightened One.

THE NAMING CEREMONY

On the fifth day after the Prince's birth, he was named **Sidhattha Gotama**, which means "wish fulfilled". His family name was **Gotama**⁷.

In accordance with the ancient custom, many learned Brahmins were invited to the palace for this naming ceremony. Amongst them were eight distinguished men. Examining the characteristics of the child, seven of them raised two fingers and gave a double interpretation, saying that he would either become a Universal Monarch or a Buddha. But the youngest **Kondañña**, who excelled the others in knowledge, raised only one finger and firmly declared that he would definitely retire from the world and become a Buddha.

THE PLOUGHING FESTIVAL

A very remarkable incident took place in his childhood. It was an unprecedented mental experience which, in later life, during his search after Truth, served as a key to his Enlightenment.

As an encouragement to agriculture the King arranged for a Ploughing Festival. It was indeed a festive occasion for all, as both nobles and commoners decked in gala dress participated in the ceremony. On the appointed day the King, accompanied by his courtiers, went to the field taking with him, the young Prince together with the nurses. Placing the child on a screened and canopied couch under the cool shade of a rose-apple tree to be watched by the nurses, the King took an active part in the Ploughing Festival.

When the festival was at its climax, the nurses stole away from the Prince's presence to catch a glimpse of the wonderful spectacle. The thoughtful child, mature in intellect though young in age, seeing none by him, sat cross-legged and intently concentrating on

inhalation and exhalation, gained one-pointedness of the mind and developed the First Ecstasy (**Jhāna**)⁸

In the midst of their enjoyment the neglectful nurses suddenly remembered their duty and when they saw the Prince absorbed in meditation, were struck with awe and immediately reported the matter to the King. He hastened to the scene and beholding the Prince in meditative posture, saluted him, saying, "This, dear child, is my second salutation."

PRINCE SIDDHATTA'S YOUTH

As a royal child Prince **Siddhattha** no doubt received a good education, although the books give no details about his schooling. Being a scion of the warrior race, he must have been specially trained in the art of warfare.

At the early age of sixteen, he married his beautiful cousin Princess **Yasodharā**⁹ who was of equal years. After his happy marriage he led a luxurious life, blissfully unaware of the vicissitudes of life outside the palace gates.

Of his luxurious life as a prince he states:-

"I was delicate, excessively delicate. In my father's dwelling three lotus ponds were made purposely for me. Blue lotuses bloomed in one, red in another and white in the third. I used no sandal-wood that was not of **Kasi**. My turban, tunic, dress and cloak were all from **Kasi**.¹⁰ Night and day, a white parasol was held over me so that I might not be touched by heat or cold, dust, leaves or dew.

"There were three palaces built for me - one for the cold season, one for the hot season, one for the rainy season.

During the four rainy months, I lived in the palace for the rainy season, entertained by female musicians, without coming down from the palace. Just as in the houses of others, food from the husks of rice, together with sour gruel, is given to the slaves and workmen, even so, in my father's dwelling, food with rice and meat was given to the slaves and workmen."

RENUNCIATION

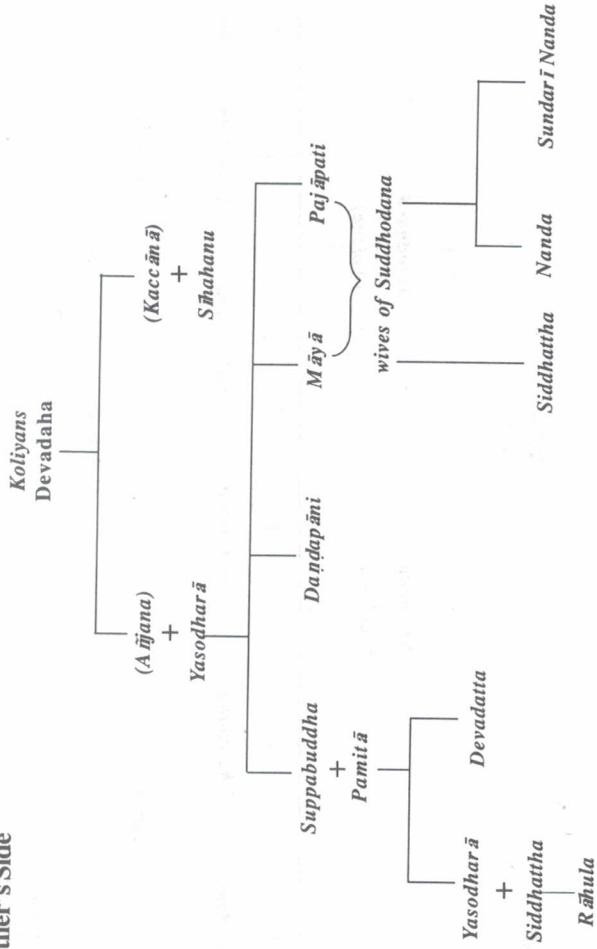
With the march of time truth gradually dawned upon him. His contemplative nature and boundless compassion did not permit him to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of a royal household. He knew no woe, but he felt deep pity for sorrowing humanity. Amidst comfort and prosperity he realized the universality of sorrow.

One glorious day, as he went out of the palace to see the world outside, he came into direct contact with the stark realities of life. Within the narrow confines of the palace, he saw only the rosy side of life; but the dark side, the common lot of mankind was veiled from him. His observant eyes met the strange sight of a decrepit old man, a diseased person, a corpse and a dignified hermit. The first three sights convinced him of the inexorable nature of life and the universal sickness of humanity. The fourth, signified the means to overcome the ills of life and attain calm and peace.

Realizing the worthlessness of sensual pleasures highly prized by ordinary men and the value of renunciation in which the wise seek delight, he decided to leave the world in search of Truth and Peace.

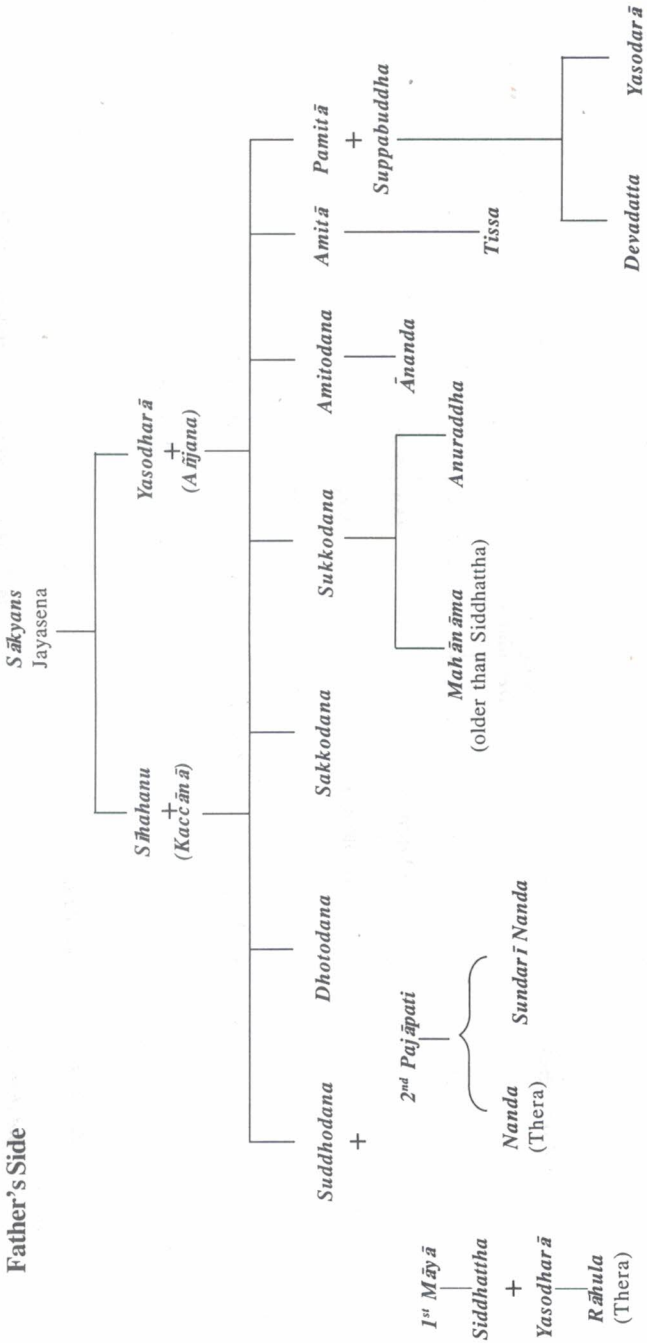
When this final decision was made after much deliberation, the seemingly happy news of the birth of a son was conveyed to him. Contrary to expectation he was not overjoyed, but regarded the first and only offspring as an impediment. Normally, an ordinary

Mother's Side



PRINCE SIDDHATTHA'S GENEALOGICAL TABLE

Father's Side



father would have welcomed the joyful tidings, but Prince **Siddhattha**, extraordinary father as he was, exclaimed, "An impediment (**rāhu**) has been born; a fetter has arisen." The infant son was accordingly named **Rāhula** by his grandfather.

The palace was no longer a congenial place for the destined Buddha. The time was ripe for him to depart. He ordered his favourite charioteer **Channa** to saddle the horse **Kanthaka** and went to the suite of apartments occupied by the Princess. Opening the door of the chamber, he stood on the threshold and cast his dispassionate glance on the wife and child who were fast asleep. His compassion for his two dear ones as well as for the whole world dominated him at the moment of parting. He was not worried about the future worldly comforts and happinesses of the mother and child as they had everything in abundance and were well protected. Leaving all behind with a light heart, he stole away from the palace at midnight and rode into the dark on his horse, attended only by his loyal charioteer. As a penniless wanderer he went forth in search of Truth and Peace.

It was in his twenty-ninth year, the turning-point of his career, that Prince **Siddhattha** made this historic journey. He journeyed far and crossing the river **Anomā (Nerañjarā)**, rested on the bank. Here, he shaved his hair and beard and handing over his garments and ornaments to **Channa**, with instructions to return to the palace, adopted the simple yellow garb of an ascetic and led a life of voluntary poverty.

The ascetic **Siddhattha**, who as a Prince had lived in the lap of luxury, became a penniless and homeless wanderer living on what little the charitables gave of their own accord.

He had no permanent abode. A shady tree or a lonely cave sheltered him day and night. Barefooted and bareheaded, he walked

in the scorching sun and in the piercing cold. His humble dress was made of cast-off, worthless, coarse rags. With no possession to call his own, except a bowl to collect his food and robes, just sufficient to cover the body, he concentrated all his time and energies upon discovering the Truth.

THE SEARCH

As a seeker after what is good (**kiṃ kusala gavesī**), searching for the unsurpassed peaceful state most excellent, he approached **Ālāra Kālāma**, an ascetic of repute and speedily learnt his doctrine and developed the seventh **Arūpa Jhāna**, the Realm of Nothingness (**Ākincaṇṇāyatana**), an advanced stage of concentration.

The unenvious teacher, delighted to hear of the success of his distinguished pupil, honoured him by placing him on a level with himself and admiringly said:-

“Happy, friend, are we; yea, extremely happy, in that we look upon a respected ascetic like you! The doctrine which I know, that also do you know; and the doctrine which you know, that I know also. As I am, so are you; as you are, so am I. Come, friend, let both of us lead the company of ascetics.”

The ascetic **Gotama** was not satisfied with mere mental concentration and an ordinary system which did not lead to **Nibbāna**. Dissatisfied with **Kālāma**’s system, he left him and approached one **Uddaka Rāmaputta** who readily admitted him as a pupil.

Before long the intelligent ascetic **Gotama** mastered his doctrine and attained the final stage of mental concentration, The Realm of

Neither Perception nor Non-perception (**N'eva saññā nāsaññāyatana**). This is the highest stage in worldly concentration when consciousness becomes so subtle and refined that it cannot be said that a consciousness either exists or not. Ancient sages could not proceed any further in mental development.

His teacher then honoured the ascetic **Gotama** further by inviting him to take full charge of all disciples as their teacher. He said:-

“Happy, friend, are we; yea, extremely happy in that we see such a venerable ascetic as you! The doctrine which **Rāma** knew, you know; the doctrine which you know, **Rāma** knew. As was **Rāma**, so are you; as you are, so was **Rāma**. Come, friend, henceforth you shall lead this company of ascetics.”

Still, he felt that his quest of life was not achieved. He was seeking **Nibbāna**, the complete cessation of suffering. Dissatisfied with **Rāmaputta**'s system too, he departed.

He found that nobody was competent to teach him what he sought as all were enmeshed in ignorance. He gave up seeking external help, for Truth and Peace are to be found within.

HIS STRUGGLE FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

Meeting with disappointment but not discouraged, the ascetic **Gotama**, seeking for the incomparable state of Peace Supreme, wandered in the district of **Magadha** and arrived in due course at **Uruvela**, the market town of **Senāni**. There, he spied a lovely spot of ground, a charming forest grove, a flowing river with pleasant sandy fords and nearby was a village where he could beg for his food.

The place was congenial for his meditation. The atmosphere was

peaceful, the surroundings were pleasant, the scenery charming. He resolved to settle down there alone to achieve his desired object. Hearing of his renunciation **Kondañña**, the youngest Brahmin who predicted his future and four sons of the other sages - **Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma** and **Assaji** - also renounced the world and joined his company.

In ancient India great importance was attached to rites, ceremonies, penances and sacrifices. It was then a popular belief that no salvation could be gained unless one led a life of strict asceticism. Accordingly, for six long years he made a superhuman struggle practising all forms of severe austerity, with the result that his delicate body was reduced almost to a skeleton. The more he tormented his body, the farther his goal receded from him.

TEMPTATION OF MĀRA THE EVIL ONE

His prolonged painful austerities proved utterly futile. They only resulted in the exhaustion of his energy. Though physically a superhuman, on account of his delicate nurture as a Prince, he could not possibly stand the great strain.

His graceful form faded almost beyond recognition. His golden coloured skin turned pale, blood dried up, sinews and muscles shrivelled, his eyes were sunk and blurred.

At this critical stage, **Māra**¹¹ approached the ascetic **Gotama** and said:-

“You are lean and deformed. Near to you is death. A thousand parts (of you belong) to death; to life (there remains) but one. Live, O good sir; life is better. Living you could perform merit. By leading a life of celibacy and making fire sacrifices, much merit could be acquired. What will you do

with this striving? Hard is the path of striving, difficult and not easily accomplished.”

He replied:-

“O Evil One, kinsman of the heedless! You have come here for your own sake. Even an iota of merit is of no avail. To them who are in need of merit it behoves you, **Māra**, to speak thus. Confidence (**Saddhā**), self-control (**Tapo**), energy (**Viriya**) and wisdom (**Paññā**) are mine. Why do you question me, who am thus intent, about life?

“Even the streams of rivers will this wind dry up. Why should not the blood of one who is thus striving dry up? When the blood dries up, the bile and phlegm also dry up. When my flesh wastes away, more and more does my mind get clarified. Still more do my mindfulness, wisdom and concentration become firm. “While I live thus, experiencing the utmost pain, my mind does not long for lust. Behold the purity of a being!

“Sense-desires (**Kāma**) are your first enemy. The second is called Aversion (**Arati**). The third is Hunger and Thirst (**Khuppiṭṭā**). The fourth is called Craving (**Taṇhā**). The fifth is Sloth and Torpor (**Thīna-Middha**). The sixth is called Fear (**Bhaya**). The seventh is Doubt (**Vicikicchā**) and the eighth is Distraction and Obstinacy (**Makkha-Thambha**). The ninth is Profit (**Lābha**), Praise (**Siloka**), Honour (**Sakkāra**) and that ill-gotten Fame (**Yasa**). The tenth is the extolling of oneself and the contempt of others.

“This is your army, the opposing host of the Evil One. That army the coward does not overcome but he who overcomes obtains happiness. “This **Muñja**¹² do I display! What boots

life in this world! Better for me is death in the battle than that one should live on, vanquished!”

With these words the ascetic **Gotama** dismissed **Māra** and made a firm determination to attain his goal, Buddhahood.

THE MIDDLE PATH

The ascetic **Gotama** was now fully convinced, through personal experience, of the utter futility of self-mortification. Abandoning it forever, he adopted an independent course - the **Majjhimā Paṭipadā**, the Middle Path.

He recalled how, when his father was engaged in ploughing, he sat in the cool shade of the rose-apple tree, having attained to the first Ecstasy. He thought - well, this is the Path to Enlightenment!

He realized that Enlightenment could not be gained with an exhausted body. So he decided to take some food. The five ascetics who attended to him, disappointed at this unexpected change of method, deserted him and went to **Isipatana**, saying that “the ascetic **Gotama** had become indulgent, had ceased from striving and had returned to a life of comfort.”

At a crucial time when help would have been most welcome, his companions left him, but he was not discouraged.

After a substantial meal offered by **Sujātā**, a generous lady, he made a firm resolve not to rise from his seat until he attained Buddhahood.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT

One happy Vesak night, as he was seated under the famous Pipal¹³

tree at Buddha **Gaya**, with mind tranquillized and purified, in the first watch he developed that supernormal knowledge which enabled him to remember his past lives (**Pubbenivāsānussati Nāṇa** -Reminiscence of Past Births). In the middle watch he developed the clairvoyant super-normal vision dealing with the death and rebirth of beings (**Cut'upapāta Nāṇa** - Perception of the Disappearing and Reappearing of Beings).

In the last watch of the night he developed the supernormal knowledge with regard to the destruction of passions (**Āsavakkhaya Nāṇa**) and comprehending things as they truly are, attained Perfect Enlightenment¹⁴ (**Sammā Sambodhi**).

Having in his 35th year attained Buddhahood, that supreme state of Perfection, He devoted the remainder of that precious life to serve humanity both by example and precept, dominated by no personal motive.

The Buddha was a human being. As a man He was born, as a man He lived and as a man His life came to an end. Though human, He became an extraordinary man (**Acchariya Manussa**). The Buddha laid stress on this fact and left no room for anyone to fall into the error of thinking that He was an immortal being. There is no deification in the case of the Buddha.

Nor does the Buddha claim to be an incarnation of Vishnu, nor does He call Himself a "Saviour" who freely saves others by His personal salvation. The Buddha exhorts His disciples to depend on themselves for their salvation, for both defilement and purity depend on oneself. "You yourselves should make the exertion. The **Tathāgatas** are only teachers," says the Buddha.

The Buddha point out the path and it is left for us to follow that path to save ourselves.

“To depend on others for salvation is negative, but to depend on oneself is positive.” Dependence on others means a surrender of one’s effort.

Furthermore, the Buddha does not claim a monopoly of Buddhahood which, as a matter of fact, is not the prerogative of any specially graced, chosen person. He reached the highest possible state of perfection any person could aspire to; and without the closed fist of a teacher, He revealed the only straight path that leads thereto. According to the teachings of the Buddha anybody may aspire to that supreme state of perfection if he makes the necessary aspiring determination and necessary exertion.

As a man He attained Buddhahood and proclaimed to the world the latent possibilities and the creative power of man. Instead of placing an unseen almighty God over man and making him subservient to such a belief, He raised the worth of mankind. It was He who taught that man could obtain his Deliverance from sorrow by his own exertion, without depending on a God and mediating priests or on sacrifices and prayers. It was He who taught the ego-centric world the noble ideal of selfless service. It was He who revolted against the degrading caste system and taught the equality of mankind. He declared that the gates of success and prosperity were open to all in every condition of life, high and low, saint and sinner, who would care to turn over a new leaf and aspire to Perfection. Irrespective of caste, colour or rank, He established for both deserving men and women a celibate order which was “democratic in constitution and communistic in distribution”. He gave complete freedom of thought and wanted us to open our eyes to see things as they truly are. He comforted the bereaved by His consoling words. He ministered to the sick that were deserted. He helped the poor who were neglected. He ennobled the lives of sinners and purified the corrupted lives of criminals. He encouraged the feeble, united the divided, enlightened the ignorant, clarified the

mystic, guided the deluded, elevated the base and dignified the noble. Rich and poor, saint and sinner, loved Him alike. Despotism and righteous kings, glorious and obscure princes and nobles, generous and miserly millionaires, haughty and humble scholars, destitute paupers, down trodden scavengers, wicked murderers, dispensed courtesans - all benefited by His words of wisdom and compassion.

His noble example was a source of inspiration to all. His Message of Peace was hailed by all with indescribable joy and was of eternal benefit to everyone who had the fortune to come under its benign influence.



1. Corresponding to Pali *Vesākha*, Samskrit *Vaisākha* and Sinhala *Vesak*.
2. Unlike the Christian Era, the Buddha Era is reckoned from the death of the Buddha which occurred in 543 B.C.
3. A pillar erected by King *Dharmāsoka* stands to this day to commemorate the sacred spot.
4. The site of *Kapilavatthu* has been identified with *Bhuila* (*Bhulya*) in the Basti district, three miles from the Bengal and N.W. Railway station of *Babuan*.
5. See the genealogical table
6. *Arūpaloka* are immaterial planes where those who have developed the *Arūpa Jhānas* (Absorptions or Ecstasies) are born.
7. *Gotama* is the family name and *Sākya* is the name of the clan to which the Buddha belonged.

Tradition holds that the sons of **Okkāka** of the **Mahāsammata** line were expelled through the plotting of their stepmother. These princes, in the course of their wanderings, arrived at the foothills of the Himalayas. Here, they met the sage **Kapila** on whose advice they founded the city of **Kapilavasthu**, which they named after him. Hearing of the enterprise of the princes, King **Okkāka** exclaimed: "**Sakyā vata bho, rājakumārā** - Capable indeed are the noble princes." Hence the clan and the kingdom they originated were known by the name **Sākya**.

The **Sākya** kingdom was situated in South Nepal and extended over much of modern Oudh.

8. A developed state of consciousness gained by concentration.
9. Also known as **Bhaddakaccānā, Bimbā, Rāhulamātā**.
10. **Kāśi** - one of the sixteen kingdoms of ancient India, its capital being Benares. It was famous for its silks and perfumes.
11. **Māra**. According to Buddhism there are five kinds of **Māras**: I. The Five Aggregates (**Khandha**), II. Moral and immoral activities (**Abhisamkhāra**), III. Death (**Maccu**), IV. Passions (**Kilesa**) and V. **Māra** the Deity (**Devaputta**).
12. Warriors wear a **Munja** grass crest on their heads or swords or on their banners to indicate they will not retreat from the battlefield.
13. As the Buddha attained Enlightenment under the shade of this tree, it was named the **Bodhi** Tree. Its descendants are still known by the same name.
14. Buddha is derived from the root *budh*, to understand. He is called the Buddha because He understood the Four Noble Truths. Usually, His disciples address their Master as Buddha, **Bhagavā**, etc. When the Buddha refers to Himself He says **Tathāgata** - Thus who hath come.

CHAPTER II

SOON AFTER THE ENLIGHTENMENT

A PAEAN OF JOY (Udāna Gāthā)

THRO' many a birth in **Samsāra**¹ wandered I,
Seeking, but not finding, the builder² of this house.
Sorrowful is repeated birth.
O house-builder! Thou art seen.
Thou shalt build no house³ again,
All thy rafters⁴ are broken, thy ridge-pole⁵ is shattered.
The Mind attains the Unconditioned.⁶
Achieved is the End of Craving

(Dhammapada vv.153,154)

THE SEVEN WEEKS AFTER THE ENLIGHTENMENT

On the auspicious day preceding the Enlightenment, the **Bodhisatta**⁷ ate some milk-porridge offered by a generous lady named **Sujātā**. After the Enlightenment for seven weeks the Buddha fasted and spent His time under the **Bodhi** tree and in its neighbourhood. The whole of the first week the Buddha sat under the **Bodhi** tree in one posture, experiencing the Bliss of Emancipation (**Vimutti Sukkha**).

At the end of the seven days the Buddha emerged from that state of concentration and in the first watch of the night⁸ thoroughly reflected on "Dependent Arising" (**Paṭicca Samuppāda**) in direct order thus: When this (cause) exists, this (effect) is; with the arising of this (cause), this (effect) arises.

In the middle watch of the night⁹ the Buddha thoroughly reflected on “Dependent Arising” in reverse order thus:- When this (cause) does not exist, this (effect) is not; with the cessation of this (cause), this (effect) ceases.

In the third watch of the night the Buddha reflected on “Dependent Arising” in direct and reverse order thus:- when this (cause) exists, this (effect) is, with the arising of this (cause) this (effect) arises; when this (cause) does not exist this (effect) is not; with the cessation of this (cause), this (effect) ceases.

Throughout the second week, as a mark of gratitude to the **Bodhi** tree that sheltered Him during His struggle for Enlightenment, the Buddha stood gazing at it with motionless eye.¹⁰

During the third week the Buddha paced up and down on a “jewelled promenade” (**Ratana Cankamana**) near the **Bodhi** tree.

The fourth week He spent in a “jewelled chamber”¹¹ (**Ratanā ghara**) meditating on the **Abhidhamma**.

During the fifth week He dwelt under the **Ajapāla** Banyan tree in the vicinity of the **Bodhi** tree. Here the Buddha sat in one posture for seven days enjoying this Bliss of Emancipation. When He emerged from that state of concentration, a certain conceited Brahmin approached the Buddha and questioned Him thus:- “In what respect, O Venerable **Gotama**, does one become a Brahmin and what are the conditions that make a Brahmin?”

Then the Blessed One uttered this paean of joy:-

“That Brahmin who has discarded evil, without conceit (**huhuṅka**), free from defilements, self-controlled, versed

in knowledge, who has led the Holy Life - rightly would call himself a Brahmin. For him there is no elation anywhere in this world."

According to the **Jātaka** Commentary it was during His stay at the foot of this tree that the three daughters¹² of **Māra - Taṇhā, Arati and Ragā** - came to tempt the Buddha.

From the **Ajapāla** Banyan tree the Buddha proceeded to the **Mucalinda** tree where He spent the sixth week. Here, too, the Buddha sat for seven days enjoying the Bliss of Emancipation. At that time there arose an unexpected great shower. Rain and gloomy weather with cold winds prevailed for seven days.

Thereupon, **Mucalinda**, the serpent-king,¹³ came out of his abode and coiling round the body of the Blessed One seven times, remained keeping his large hood over the head of the Blessed One so that the Blessed One may not be touched by cold, heat, gadflies, gnats, wind, sun or reptiles.

At the close of seven days **Mucalinda**, seeing the clear, cloudless sky, uncoiled himself from around the body of the Blessed One and leaving his own form, took the guise of a young man and stood in front of the Blessed One with joined hands.

Thereupon the Buddha uttered this paean of joy:-

"Happy is seclusion to him who is contented, to him who has heard the Truth and to him who sees. Happy is goodwill in this world and so is restraint towards all beings. Happy in this world, is non-attachment, the passing beyond sense-desires. The suppression of the 'I am' conceit is indeed the highest happiness."

The seventh week the Buddha spent at the **Rājāyatana** tree. Here,

too, the Buddha sat in one posture for seven days enjoying the Bliss of Emancipation.

THE FIRST TWO CONVERTS

At that time two merchants, **Tapassu** and **Bhallika**, from **Ukkala** (Orissa) were travelling to their native town. Then a **Devatā**,¹⁴ who was a blood-relative of these two merchants, spoke to them as follows:-

“The Blessed One, good sirs, is dwelling at the foot of the **Rājāyatana** tree, soon after His Enlightenment. Go and serve the Blessed One with flour and honeycomb. It will conduce to your well-being and happiness for a long time.”

Thereupon the two merchants, **Tapassu** and **Bhallika**, took with them flour and honeycomb and approaching the Buddha, said:

“O Lord, may the Blessed One accept this flour and honeycomb so that it may long tend to our well-being and happiness!”

Then it occurred to the Blessed One:- The **Tathāgatas** do not accept food with their hands. How shall I accept this flour and honeycomb?

Forthwith the four Great Kings¹⁵ understood the thoughts of the Blessed One and from the four directions, offered Him four stone bowls,¹⁶ saying: “O Lord, may the Blessed One accept in these the flour and honeycomb!”

The Blessed One accepted the new bowls, received the flour and honeycomb in them, and ate thereof.

When the Buddha finished His meal the two merchants prostrated themselves before His feet and said: “We, O Lord, seek refuge in

the Buddha and the Dhamma. May the Blessed One treat us lay disciples who have sought refuge from today till death!”

They were the first disciples who took the two-fold formula.¹⁷



1. *Existence,*
2. *i.e., Craving (Taṇhā),*
3. *Body,*
4. *Passions,*
5. *Ignorance,*
6. *Nibbāṇa,*
7. *One who is aspiring to attain Buddhahood is called a Bodhisatta (Bodhi-Enlightenment; satta-being). This term was applied to Prince Siddhattha before he gained Enlightenment*
8. *i.e., from 6 to 10 p.m.,*
9. *i.e., from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.*
10. *On the spot where the Buddha stood, a Caitya has been erected by King Dharmāsoka. This was named Animisalocana Caitya and is still to be seen.*
11. *So called because the Buddha reflected on the jewels of the Abhidhamma.*
12. *These three cannot be passions as this incident took place after the Enlightenment.*

13. This **Nāga** king cannot be a human being. The **Vinaya** Text also cites an interesting story of a serpent who, assuming the form of a human being, lived for some time as a Bhikkhu in robes.
14. **Devatās** are celestial or terrestrial deities who, as a rule, are invisible to the naked eye. This particular **Devatā** had been related to these two merchants in a previous birth.
15. **Cāummahārājikas** - the Guardian Deities of the four Quarters.
16. The Commentary states that the Buddha wished that the four bowls be amalgamated into one.
17. Viz., the Buddha and the Dhamma - **Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi**. The Sangha or the Noble Order was not in existence then. The **Jāka** Commentary states when these two converts begged of the Buddha to give them an object of worship, the Buddha touched His head and presented them some hair. It is believed that this particular relic has been enshrined in the modern Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon.

CHAPTER III

THE BUDDHA PROPOUNDS HIS DHAMMA

INVITATION TO TEACH THE DHAMMA

At the close of the fasting period, as the Buddha was engaged in solitary meditation, He thought:-

“With difficulty have I apprehended the Dhamma. There is no need to proclaim it now. This Dhamma is not easily understood by those who are overcome by lust and hatred. The lust-ridden, shrouded by the mass darkness, do not see this Dhamma, which goes against the stream, abstruse, profound, difficult to perceive and subtle.”

Eventually, His mind turned into inaction and not to the teaching of the Dhamma.

Thereupon, a celestial being named **Brahma Sahampati** read the thoughts of the Blessed One and fearing that the world might perish through not hearing the Dhamma, approached the Buddha and invited Him to teach the Dhamma. He wisely remarked:-

“In ancient times there arose in **Magadha** a Dhamma, impure, evolved by the corrupted. Open this Door to the Deathless. May they hear the Dhamma, understood by the Stainless!” Just as one standing on the summit of a rocky mountain would behold the people around, even so may the All-Seeing Wise One ascend this palace of Dhamma! May the Sorrowless One look upon the people, plunged in grief and overcome by birth and decay. “Rise, O Hero, the victor

in battle, the caravan-leader, the debt-free One and wander in the world! May the Blessed One propound the Dhamma! There will be those who will understand the Doctrine!”

When **Brahma Sahampati** entreated the Buddha for the third time, He surveyed the world with His Buddha Vision.

On surveying the world¹ He perceived beings with little as well as much dust in their eyes, with keen and dull intellect, with good and bad characteristics, who are easy and difficult to be taught and a few others who live perceiving the dangers of evil and of a future life.

The Buddha, therefore, accepted the invitation of **Brahma Sahampati** and said:-

“Opened to them are the Doors to the Deathless.² Let those who have ears repose confidence. Being aware of the weariness of it, O Brahma, I did not preach amongst men this glorious and excellent Dhamma.”

The delighted Brahma, thinking, “I made myself the occasion for the Blessed One to expound the Dhamma.” Respectfully saluted Him and straightaway disappeared.

On the Way to Benares to Teach the Dhamma

“To whom shall I teach the Dhamma first? Who will understand the Dhamma quickly?” was the first thought that occurred to the Buddha before He embarked on His noble Mission.

“Well, there is **Ālāra Kālāma**³ who is learned, clever, wise and has for long been with little dust in his eyes. How if I were to teach the Dhamma to him first? He will understand the Dhamma quickly.”

Then a deity appeared before the Blessed One and said, “Lord! **Ālāra Kālāma** died a week ago.” With His Divine Eye He perceived that it was so. Then He thought of **Uddaka Rāmaputta**.⁴ Instantly, a deity informed Him that he died the evening before. With His Divine Eye the Buddha perceived this to be true.

Ultimately, He thought of the five Bhikkhus who attended on Him during His struggle for Enlightenment. With His superhuman Divine Eye He perceived that they were residing in the Deer Park at **Isipatana** in Benares. So the Buddha stayed at **Uruvela** as long as He wished and set out for Benares.

Between **Gayā** and the **Bodhi**,⁵ **Upaka**, a wandering ascetic, saw the Buddha travelling on the highway and said, “Extremely clear are your senses friend! Pure and clean is your complexion. On account of whom have you renounced, friend? Who is your teacher? Whose doctrine do you profess?”

The Buddha replied:-

“All have I overcome, all do I know.

From all am I detached, all have I renounced.

Wholly absorbed am I in the destruction of craving
(Arahantship).

Having comprehended all by myself who shall I call my
teacher?

No teacher have I.⁶ An equal to me there is not.

In the world, including the gods, there is no rival to me.

Indeed and Arahant am I in this world.

An unsurpassed teacher am I.

Alone am I the All-Enlightened.

Cool and appeased am I.

To establish the wheel of Dhamma I go to the city of **Kasi**.

In this blind world I shall beat the drum of Deathlessness.”

“Then, friend, you do admit that you are an Arahant, a limitless Conqueror?” queried **Upaka**.

“Like me are conquerors who have attained to the destruction of Defilements. All the evil conditions have I conquered. Hence, **Upaka**, I am called a Conqueror,” replied the Buddha.

“It may be so, friend!” **Upaka** curtly remarked and nodding his head, turned into a by-road and departed.

Unperturbed by the first rebuff the Buddha received, He wandered from place to place and arrived in due course at the Deer Park in Benares. The five monks who saw Him coming from afar resolved not to pay Him due respect as they misconstrued His change of effort during His struggle for Enlightenment. But, as the Buddha drew near, His august personality was such that they were compelled to receive Him with due honour. Nevertheless, they addressed Him by name and by the title “**Āvuso**” (friend), a form of address applied generally to juniors. The Blessed One advised them not to address Him thus as He had attained Buddhahood. But the sceptical monks refused to believe Him. For the second and third time the Buddha advised them. Yet, the monks refused to acknowledge His superiority.

Finally, the Buddha said, “Do you know, O Bhikkhus, of an occasion when I ever spoke to you thus before?”

“Nay, indeed, Lord!”

“The **Tathāgata**, O Bhikkhus, is not luxurious, has not given up striving and has not adopted a life of abundance. An Exalted One, O Bhikkhus, is the **Tathāgata**: a Fully Enlightened One is He. Give ear, O Bhikkhus! Immortality has been attained. I shall instruct and teach the Dhamma. If you act according to my instructions,

you will before long realize, by your own intuitive wisdom and thereafter continue attaining in this life itself, that supreme state of the Holy Life, for the sake of which sons of noble families rightly renounce the household for the homeless life.”

It was a frank utterance, issuing from the sacred mouth of the Buddha. The cultured monks, though adamant in their views, were now fully convinced of the great achievement of the Buddha and of His competence to act as their spiritual Guide. Two of the Bhikkhus the Buddha instructed, whilst three went out for alms. With what they brought, all the six sustained themselves. Three of the Bhikkhus He instructed, whilst two Bhikkhus went out for alms. With what they brought, all the six sustained themselves.

The **Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta** was the first Discourse the Buddha delivered to them. Hearing it, **Koṇḍañña**, the eldest, attained **Sotāpatti**, the first stage of Sainthood. The other four attained **Sotāpatti** later. It was after hearing the **Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta**, which deals with soul-lessness, that they all attained Arahantship, the final stage of Sainthood.

THE FIVE MONKS

The five Bhikkhus who thus attained Arahantship and became His first disciples were **Koṇḍañña**, **Bhaddiya**, **Vappa**, **Mahānāma** and **Assaji**.

Koṇḍañña was the youngest of the eight Brahmins invited for the naming ceremony and who alone foretold that the prince would definitely become a Buddha. The other four disciples were sons of four of the other seven Brahmins. These five Brahmins had retired to the forest as ascetics in anticipation of the renunciation of Prince **Siddhattha** and at **Uruvela**, they had attended on Him when He was striving to attain Buddhahood. But when He gave up fasting

and penance, they left Him and went to Isipatana. Soon after their departure, He attained Buddhahood. It was seven weeks after His Enlightenment that the Buddha visited **Isipatana** and expounded the Doctrine to them.

The Venerable **Konḍañña** became the first Arahant and the senior member of the Sangha. It was Venerable **Assaji**, one of the five, who converted the great **Sāriputta**, the first chief disciple of the Buddha.



1. *At first the Buddha did not survey the world with His Divine Eye. He only reflected on the profoundness of the Dhamma which He apprehended.*
2. *Note the positive term **Amata** (immortality) which is applied to **Nibbāna**.*
3. *The first religious teacher who taught the **Bodhisatta** the **Jhānas** extending to the Realm of Nothingness.*
4. *The second religious teacher who taught the **Bodhisatta** the highest state of mundane spiritual development - the Realm of Neither Perception nor Non-Perception.*
5. *The Tree of Enlightenment.*
6. *The Buddha made such a statement because He attained Enlightenment by Himself without the aid of a teacher. He had teachers before His Enlightenment, but nobody taught Him the way to attain Buddhahood. As such, Buddhism is not a natural outgrowth of Hinduism.*

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST DISCOURSE

DHAMMACAKKAPPAVATTANA SUTTA¹

THUS have I heard:-

On one occasion the Blessed One was residing at the Deer Park² in **Isipatana**, near Benares. Thereupon the Blessed One addressed the five Bhikkhus as follows:-

“There are two extremes (**Anta**) which should be avoided by a recluse.

“(The) constant attachment to sensual pleasures³ (**Kāma sukhallikānuyoga**) which is base, vulgar, worldly, ignoble, and profitless; and (the) constant addiction to self mortification⁴ (**Attakilamathānuyoga**) which is painful ignoble and profitless.⁵

“Avoiding these two extremes, O Bhikkhus, the **Tathāgata** has discovered the Middle Path (**Majjhimā Patipadā**) which promotes sight, knowledge, Peace (**Vupasamāya**), Higher Wisdom (**Abhiññāya**), Enlightenment (**Sambodhāya**) and **Nibbāna**.

“What, O Bhikkhus, is that Middle Path the **Tathāgata** has discovered which promotes sight, knowledge, Peace, Higher Wisdom, Enlightenment and **Nibbāna**?

“It is this Noble Eight Fold Path namely, Right Understanding

(**Sammā Ditṭhi**), Right Thoughts (**Sammā Saṅkappa**), Right Speech (**Sammā Vācā**), Right Action (**Sammā Kammanta**), Right Livelihood (**Sammā Ājīva**), Right Effort (**Sammā Vāyāma**), Right Mindfulness (**Sammā Sati**) and Right Concentration (**Sammā Samādhi**). This, O Bhikkhus, is the Middle Path which the **Tathāgata** has found out.

(1) “Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the NOBLE TRUTH OF SUFFERING:- Birth is suffering, decay is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, to be united with the unpleasant is suffering, to be separated from the pleasant is suffering, not to receive what one desires is suffering, in brief, the five Aggregates of Attachment⁶ are suffering.

(2) “Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the NOBLE TRUTH OF THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING:- It is the craving which produces rebirth, accompanied by passionate clinging, welcoming this and that(life). It is the craving for sensual pleasures (**Kāmatanḥā**),⁷ craving for becoming (**Bhavatanḥā**)⁸ and craving for annihilation (**Vibhavatanḥā**).

(3) “Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the NOBLE TRUTH OF THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING:- It is the complete separation from and destruction of, this very craving, its forsaking, renunciation, liberation and detachment.⁹

(4) “Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the NOBLE TRUTH OF THE PATH LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING:- It is this Noble Eightfold Path - namely, Right Understanding, Right Thoughts, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

(1) i. “THIS IS THE NOBLE TRUTH OF SUFFERING” (**Dukkha Ariya Sacca**). Thus, O Bhikkhus, with respect to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye, the knowledge, the wisdom, the insight and the light.

ii. “This Noble Truth of Suffering SHOULD BE COMPREHENDED” (**Pariññeyya**). Thus, O Bhikkhus, with respect to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye the light.

iii. “This Noble Truth of Suffering HAS BEEN COMPREHENDED” (**Pariññāta**). Thus, O Bhikkhus, with respect to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye the light.

(2) i. “THIS IS THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING” (**Dukkha Samudaya Ariya Sacca**). Thus, O Bhikkhus, with respect to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye the light.

ii. “This Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering SHOULD BE ERADICATED” (**Pahātabba**). Thus, O Bhikkhus, with respect to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye the light.

iii. “This Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering HAS BEEN ERADICATED” (**Pahīnam**). Thus, O Bhikkhus, with respect to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye the light.

(3) i. “THIS IS THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING” (**Dukkha Nirodha Ariya Sacca**). Thus, O Bhikkhus, with respect to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye the light.

ii. “This Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering SHOULD BE REALIZED” (**Sacchikātabbāṃ**). Thus, O Bhikkhus, with respect to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye the light.

iii. “This Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering HAS BEEN REALIZED” (**Sacchikatam**). Thus, O Bhikkhus, with respect to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye the light.

(4) i. “THIS IS THE NOBLE TRUTH OF THE PATH LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING” (**Dukkha Nirodhagāminī Paṭipadā Ariya Sacca**). Thus, O Bhikkhus, with respect to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye the light.

ii. “This Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering SHOULD BE DEVELOPED” (**Bhāvetabbāṃ**). Thus, O Bhikkhus, with respect to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye the light.

iii. “This Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering HAS BEEN DEVELOPED” (**Bhāvitam**). Thus, O Bhikkhus, with respect to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye the light.



“As long as, O Bhikkhus, the absolute true knowledge regarding these Four Noble Truths under their three aspects and twelve modes¹⁰ was not perfectly clear to me, so long did I not acknowledge, in this world, together with gods, **Māras** and Brahmas, amongst the hosts of ascetics and priests, gods and men, that I had gained the Incomparable, Supreme Enlightenment. When,

O Bhikkhus, the absolute true knowledge regarding these Four Noble Truths, under their three aspects and twelve modes, became perfectly clear to me, then only did I acknowledge in this world, together with gods, **Māras** and Brahmas, amongst the hosts of ascetics and priests, gods and men, that I had gained the Incomparable, Supreme Enlightenment.

“And there arose in me the knowledge and insight - Unshakable is the deliverance of my mind, this is my last birth, now there is no more rebirth.”

This is the Blessed One said and the delighted Bhikkhus applauded the words of the Blessed One. While this Doctrine was being expounded, there arose in the Venerable **Koṇḍañña**¹¹ the dustless, stainless eye of Truth - “Whatsoever has arisen, all that must inevitably perish.”

When the Buddha expounded this **Dhammacakka**, the earth-bound deities exclaimed:-

“This excellent **Dhammacakka**, which could not be expounded by any ascetic, priest, god, **Māra** or Brahma in this world, was expounded by the Blessed One at the Deer Park in **Isipatana**, near Benares.”

Hearing it, the **Devās** of **Cātummahārājika**, **Tāvātimsa**, **Yāma**, **Tusita**, **Nimmāṇarati**, **Paranimmitavasavatti**; and the Brahmas of **Brahma Pārisajja**, **Brahma Purohita**, **Mahā Brahma**, **Parittābha**, **Appamāṇābha**, **Ābhassara**, **Parittāsubha**, **Appamāṇasubha**, **Subhakiṇha**, **Vehapphala**, **Aviha**, **Atappa**, **Sudassa**, **Sudassi** and **Akaniṭṭha** also raised the same joyous cry.

Thus at that very moment, at that very instant, this cry extended as

far as the Brahma Realm. These ten thousand world systems quaked, tottered and trembled violently.

A radiant light, surpassing the effulgence of the Devas, appeared in the world.

Then the Blessed One said: “Friends, **Koṇḍañña** has indeed understood. Friends, **Koṇḍañña** has indeed understood.”

Therefore, the Venerable **Koṇḍañña** was named **Aññāta Koṇḍañña**.



1. ***Dhammacakka** is frequently rendered by “The Wheel of Truth”, “The Wheel of Righteousness”, “The Kingdom of Righteousness”, etc. According to the commentators Dhamma here means wisdom or knowledge and cakka means founding or establishment. **Dhammacakka**, therefore, means the founding or establishment of wisdom, **Dhammacakkappavattana** means the exposition of the founding of wisdom. In this Discourse the Buddha expounds the Middle Path which He Himself discovered and which became one of the salient features of His Teaching. He opens the Discourse by advising the monks to avoid the two extremes of sensual pleasures and self-mortification. The former retards one’s spiritual progress, the latter weakens one’s intellect.*
2. *Modern **Sārnāth**, where a former existence the Master sacrificed His life to save a helpless doe and her unborn little one. The locality takes its modern name from the **Bodhisatta** who, in that ancient birth, was **Sāraṅga Nātha**, Protector of the Deer.*
3. *The first extreme was the view of materialists.*
4. *The five monks along with the ascetics of old adhered to this belief.*
5. *The Buddha was conversant with both views and was able to speak*

of their profitlessness from personal experience. He criticized those views and suggested the most practicable, rational, beneficial path which alone leads to perfect purity and perfect Deliverance.

6. **Rūpa** (Matter), **Vedanā** (Sensations), **Saññā** (Perceptions), **Samkhāra** (mental states for Volitional Activities) and **Viññāṇa** (Consciousness).
7. **Bhava-taṇhā** is craving connected with the views of Eternalism (**Sāssata Dittṭhi**).
8. **Vibhava-taṇha** is craving connected with the view of Nihilism (**Uccheda Dittṭhi**).
9. i.e., **Nibbāna**.
10. The three aspects are the knowledge of the Truths (**Sacca Ñāṇa**), the knowledge as regards the function of the Truths (**Kicca Ñāṇa**) and the knowledge that the function has been accomplished (**Kata Ñāṇa**). Each Truth consists of these three aspects. Thus the Four Truths consist of twelve modes.
11. He attained **Sotāpatti** the first stage of Sainthood. The others attained **Sotāpatti** later.

CHAPTER V

THE SENDING OF THE MISSIONERS

THE CONVERSION OF YASA

In Benares there was a young man named **Yasa**, son of a millionaire, who led a luxurious life at home. Realizing the vanities of worldly life, he stole away from home at night and went in the direction of **Isipatana** where the Buddha was staying. The Buddha, seeing him, invited him to His presence and expounded the Dhamma. Hearing it, he at first attained **Sotāpatti** and later became an Arahant. The sorrowing father, who was looking for his missing son, also came across the Buddha, and hearing the Dhamma from Him, became the first lay disciple (**Upāsaka**) who sought refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. He then invited the Buddha and the Venerable **Yasa** to his house for alms. When the Buddha visited his house and expounded the Dhamma, the Venerable **Yasa**'s mother and his former wife also sought refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. They were his first two lay women disciples (**Upāsikā**).

The Venerable **Yasa** had fifty-four friends. Hearing of the Venerable **Yasa**'s conversion, they also entered the Order and attained Arahantship.

EXHORTATION TO THE FIRST MISSIONERS

When there were sixty Arahants, excluding the Buddha, in this world, the Blessed One uttered the following memorable words and despatched them in various directions to propagate the Sublime Dhamma:-

“Freed am I, O Bhikkhus, from all bonds, whether divine or human. You, too, O Bhikkhus, are freed from all bonds whether divine or human.

“Go forth, O Bhikkhus, for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, benefit and happiness of gods and men ... Let not two go by one way. Preach, O Bhikkhus, the Dhamma, excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, excellent in the end, both in spirit and in the letter. Proclaim the Holy Life, altogether perfect and pure.

“There are beings with a little dust in their eyes, who, not hearing the Dhamma, will fall away. There will be those who understand the Dhamma.

“I, too, O Bhikkhus, will go to **Uruvela** in **Senānigāma**, in order to preach the Dhamma.”

With this exhortation, the Buddha despatched His first sixty disciples in various directions.

CONVERSION OF THIRTY YOUNG MEN

As it was the rainy season the Buddha spent His first Retreat at **Isipatana** in Benares. Immediately after He went towards **Uruvela**. On the way He rested at the foot of a tree. At that time thirty happy young men went with their wives to a grove to amuse themselves. As one had no wife he took with him a courtesan.

While they were enjoying themselves, this woman absconded with their valuables. The young men who went in search of her, saw the Buddha and inquired of Him whether He saw a woman passing that way.

“Which do you think, young men, is better - seeking a woman or seeking oneself?” questioned the Buddha.

“Seeking oneself is better, O Lord!” replied the young men.

“Well, then, sit down: I shall preach the Doctrine to you,” said the Buddha.

They attentively listened to Him and the “Eye of Truth”¹ arose in them. Later, they all entered the Order and received the Higher Ordination.

CONVERSION OF THE THREE KASSAPA BROTHERS

At **Uruvela** there lived three matted-hair (**Jaṭila**) ascetics known as **Uruvela Kassapa**, **Nadi Kassapa** and **Gayā Kassapa**. They were all brothers living separately with 500, 300 and 200 disciples respectively. With much effort, at times using His psychic powers too, the Buddha at first converted the eldest **Kassapa** who was greatly infatuated by his own spiritual attainments.

Thereupon he with his disciples entered the Order and obtained the Higher Ordination. The other two brothers and their disciples followed suit.

Accompanied by them all, the Buddha repaired to **Gayā Sīsa** where He preached the **Ādittapariyāya Sutta** (“All in Flames”), hearing which all attained Arahantship.

THE BUDDHA MEETS KING BIMBISĀRA

With His large retinue of Arahant disciples the Buddha, in accordance with the promise He made to King **Bimbisāra** before His Enlightenment, proceeded to **Rājagaha**.

The king, hearing of His arrival in his kingdom, went with a large following to pay his respects to the Buddha. As the ascetic **Kassapa** was held in high esteem by his people, he was at a loss to understand whether the Buddha was a disciple of **Kassapa** or the latter was a disciple of the former. The Buddha, reading his thought, questioned **Kassapa** as to why he abandoned fire-worship.

Then the Venerable **Kassapa** acknowledged the Buddha's superiority, saying:-

“My teacher, Lord, is the Lord: I am the disciple. My teacher, Lord is the Lord: I am the disciple.”

The devout people were pleased to hear of the conversion. The Buddha thereupon preached the **Mahā Nārada Kassapa Jātaka** to show that they were similarly converted in a previous birth. The “Eye of Truth” arose in them all. King **Bimbisāra** attained **Sotāpatti**. Thereupon the king invited the Buddha and His followers to his palace for the meal. At the close of the meal on the following day the king offered his Bamboo Grove (**Veluvanārāma**) for the use of the Buddha and His disciples.

CONVERSION OF SĀRIPUTTA AND MOGGALLĀNA

Not far from **Rājagaha** in the village **Upatissa**, also known as **Nālaka**, there lived a very intelligent youth, named **Sāriputta** (Son of **Sāri**). Since he belonged to the leading family of the village, he was also called **Upatissa**. He had three sisters - **Cālā**, **Upacālā** and **Sisūpacālā** - and three brothers - **Upasena**, **Cunda** and **Revata**.

Though nurtured in Brahmanism, his broad outlook on life and mature wisdom compelled him to renounce his ancestral religion for the more tolerant and scientific Teachings of the Buddha

Gotama. His brothers and sisters followed his noble example. His father, **Vanganta**, apparently adhered to the Brahmin faith. His mother, on the contrary, was converted to Buddhism by himself at the moment of his death.

Upatissa was brought up in the lap of luxury. He found a very intimate friend in **Kolita**, also known as **Moggallāna**, with whom he was closely associated from an infinite past. One day, as both of them were enjoying a hill-top festival called the **Giragga Samajja**, they realized how vain, how transient, were all sensual pleasures. Instantly they decided to leave the world and seek the Path of Release.

Dismissing their attendants and without even informing their parents, they wandered from place to place in quest of Peace.

The two young seekers went at first to **Sanjaya**, who had a following of 500 disciples and sought ordination under him. Before long they acquired the meagre knowledge which their master could impart to them; but unsatisfied with his teaching they left him and meeting disappointment everywhere, returned to their own village. Ultimately, they agreed between them that whosoever first discovers the Path should teach the other. It was at this time that the Venerable **Assaji**, one of the first five disciples, went in the direction of **Rājagaha**.

With body well composed, robes neatly arranged, this venerable figure passed with measured steps from door to door, accepting the morsels of food which the charitable placed in his bowl. The saintly deportment of this dignified person at once arrested the attention of **Upatissa**, who was wandering in the city of **Rājagaha**. "Never before have I seen," thought **Upatissa** to himself, "an ascetic like this. Surely he must be one of those who have attained Arahantship or one who is treading the path leading to Arahantship. What if I were to approach him and ask:-

‘For whose sake, Sir, have you retired from the world? Who is your teacher? Whose doctrine do you profess?’ **Upatissa**, however, refrained from questioning him, as he thought he would thereby interfere with his silent begging tour.

The Arahant **Assaji**, having begged what little he needed, was seeking a suitable place to take his meal. **Upatissa**, seeing this, gladly availed himself of the opportunity to offer him his own stool and water from his own pot. Fulfilling thus the preliminary duties of a pupil, he exchanged pleasant greetings with him and reverently inquired:-

“Calm and serene, Reverend Sir, are your organs of sense; clean and clear is the hue of your skin. For whose sake did you retire from the world? Who is your teacher? Whose doctrine do you profess?”

The unassuming Arahant **Assaji** modestly replied:- “I am still a novice in the Order, brother; I am not able to expound the Dhamma to you at length.”

“I am **Upatissa**, Reverend Sir. Say much or little according to your ability and it is left to me to understand it in a hundred or a thousand ways. “Say little or much,” **Upatissa** continued.

“Tell me just the substance. The substance only do I require. A mere jumble of words is of no avail.”

The Venerable **Assaji** uttered a four-line stanza, skilfully summing up the profound philosophy of the Master, in the scientific truth of the law of cause and effect.

“**Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā - tesam hetum tathāgato
Āha tesañ cayo nirodho - evaṃ vādi Mahā-Samaṇo.**”

“Of things that proceed from a cause
Their cause the **Tathāgata** has told,
And also their cessation:
Thus teaches the great Ascetic.”

So well did the Venerable **Assaji** guide him on his upward path that, immediately on hearing the first two lines, he attained the first stage of Sainthood.

Now, in accordance with the agreement, he returned to his companion **Kolita** to inform him of the joyful tidings. **Kolita**, who was as enlightened as his friend, also attained to the same state on hearing the whole stanza. Overwhelmed with joy at the successful conclusion of their search after Peace, they went, as in duty bound, to meet their teacher **Saṅjaya** with the object of converting him to their new faith. Frustrated in their attempt, **Upatissa** and **Kolita**, accompanied by 250 of the followers of **Saṅjaya** who readily joined them, repaired to the **Veluvana** monastery to see their illustrious Teacher, the Buddha.

In compliance with their request, the Buddha admitted both of them into the Order by the mere utterance of the words:- “**Etha Bhikkhave!** Come, O Bhikkhus!”

A fortnight later, the Venerable **Sāriputta** attained Arahantship on hearing the Buddha expound the **Vedanā Pariggaha Sutta** to the wandering ascetic **Dighanakha**. On the very same day in the evening the Buddha summoned all His disciples to His presence and conferred the exalted positions of the first and second disciples in the Sangha respectively on the Venerable **Sāriputta** and **Moggāllana**, who also had attained Arahantship a week earlier.



1. *Dhammacakkhu*. This refers to any of the three lower Paths - *Sotāpatti*, *Sakadāgāmi* and *Anāgāmi*.
2. *King Seniya Bimbisāra* ruled in *Magadha* with its capital at *Rājagaha*. He was the Buddha's first royal patron. *Ajātasattu* was his ungrateful son. Instigated by *Devadatta Thera*, he caused the cruel death of his saintly father. Later, he became one of the chief lay disciples of the Buddha and took a leading part in the holding of the First Convocation.

CHAPTER VI

THE BUDDHA VISITS HIS BIRTHPLACE

KING SUDDHODANA DESIRES TO SEE THE BUDDHA

On hearing that the Buddha was preaching the Dhamma in **Rājagaha**, King **Suddhodana** was desirous of seeing Him. Nine courtiers, each with a large following, were sent on nine successive occasions to invite the Buddha to **Kapilavatthu**. Contrary to the King's expectations all nine attained Arahantship and joined the Order. Since Arahants are indifferent to worldly things they did not convey the King's message to the Buddha.

The disappointed King finally despatched **Kāludāyi**, who was a playmate of the Buddha. He agreed to go on condition that he would be allowed to enter the Order.

He, too, hearing the Dhamma, attained Arahantship and entered the Order. But, unlike the others, he conveyed the message to the Buddha and persuaded Him to visit His aged royal father. The Buddha, attended by a large retinue of His disciples, journeyed the whole distance preaching the Dhamma on the way and arrived in **Kapilavatthu** in two months.

Arrangements were made for Him to stay in the Park of **Nigrodha**, a **Sākya**. The conceited elderly **Sākya**s, without paying Him due obeisance, put forward the younger ones to salute Him. The Buddha subdued their pride by rising into the air and exhibiting the "Twin Wonder".¹ The King, seeing this wonderful sight, saluted Him immediately, saying that it was his third salutation.² Then, all the other **Sākya**s paid Him due respect.

Thereupon the Buddha came down from the sky and sat on the prepared seat. The relatives, too sat down to listen to Him.

Then a strange phenomenon occurred. Rain broke out, but it wetted only those who wished to be wet and not others. When the **Sākyans** marvelled at this phenomenon, the Buddha preached the **Vessantara Jātaka** to show that a similar incident took place in the presence of his relatives in a previous birth.

THE BUDDHA GOES ON HIS ALMS-ROUND

THE KING SEES THE LIGHT

As no one invited Him for the noon-day meal on the following day, the Buddha, bowl in hand, went from house to house in the streets of **Kapilavatthu** seeking alms together with His disciples. This was reported to the King and he, with agitated heart, hurried to the scene and inquired of the Buddha why He was thus disgracing the family.

“This is the custom of our lineage, O King!” replied the Buddha to the King’s astonishment.

“Surely, Lord, ours is the warrior lineage of **Mahāsammata** and not a single warrior has gone seeking alms.”

“This royal lineage is yours, O King; mine is the Buddha lineage.”

Standing in the street the Buddha then advised the King thus:-

“Be alert! Be not Heedless! Lead a righteous life.

The righteous live happily, both in this world and in the next.”

The King saw the light of Truth and attained the first stage of Sainthood.

Soon, he took the bowl from the Buddha and conducted Him and His disciples to the palace and served them all with food. After the meal the Buddha preached the Dhamma thus:-

“Lead a righteous life and not one that is corrupt.

The righteous live happily, both in this world and in the next.”

Thereupon the King attained **Sakadāgāmi** (Once-Returner), the second stage of Sainthood, and **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami** attained the first stage of Sainthood.

On a later occasion, hearing the **Dhammapāla Jātaka**, the King attained **Anāgāmi** (Never-Returner), the third stage of Sainthood.

On his death-bed the King heard the Dhamma from the Buddha for the last time and attained Arahantship.

THE BUDDHA AND PRINCESS YASODHARĀ

When the Buddha visited the palace, all but Princess **Yasodharā** came to pay their reverence to the Buddha. **Yasodharā** thought, “Certainly if there is any virtue in me, the noble Lord Himself will come to my presence. Then will I reverence Him.”

The Buddha handed His bowl to the King and accompanied by His two chief disciples, entered the chamber of **Yasodharā** and sat on the prepared seat, saying:- “Let the King’s daughter reverence as she likes. Say nothing.”

Swiftly she came, clasped His ankles and placing her head on His feet, revered Him as she liked.

The King then commented on her great love and said, “Lord, when

my daughter heard that You were wearing yellow robes, she also robed herself in yellow; when she heard that You were taking one meal a day, she also did the same; when she heard that You had given up lofty couches, she lay on a low couch; when she heard that You had given up garlands and scents, she also gave them up; when her relatives sent messages to say that they would maintain her, she did not even look at a single one. So virtuous was my daughter!"

"Not only in this birth but in a previous birth, too, she protected me, O King," remarked the Buddha and cited the **Candakinnara Jātaka**. Consoling her with these words, the Buddha left the palace. After the death of King **Suddhodana**, when **Mahā Pajapati Gotami** became a Bhikkhuni, **Yasodharā** also entered the Order and later attained Arahantship.

It may be mentioned that Princess **Yasodharā** was of the same age as the Buddha.

THE BUDDHA AND HIS STEP-BROTHER NANDA

Two days after the arrival of the Buddha in **Kapilavatthu**, Prince **Nanda**, the son of Queen **Pājapati Gotami**, was celebrating his consecration ceremony, marriage ceremony and the house-warming ceremony. It was on the occasion of these three festivals that the Buddha visited the palace. The Buddha handed the bowl to Prince **Nanda** and uttering a Blessing, rose to go without taking the bowl. The prince followed Him. Princess **Janapada Kalyāni**, seeing **Nanda** following the Buddha, said, "Return quickly, O noble Lord!" Prince **Nanda** was deeply moved by these words that fell from the mouth of his fiancée, but with deference to the Buddha he could not return the bowl to Him. So, bowl in hand, he went to the park with the Buddha and was asked to join the Order. With reluctance he entered the Order out of respect for Him as a Buddha and as an

elder brother of his; but he was constantly thinking of his fiancée. The Buddha, reading his thoughts, devised a means to set him on the right path. With the object of showing him celestial nymphs the Buddha, using His psychic powers, took him to a heavenly plane. On the way **Nanda** Bhikkhu was shown a singed she-monkey clinging to a burnt-up stump in a scorched field. Reaching heaven **Nanda** Bhikkhu beheld the celestial nymphs and was so much fascinated by them that he compared his charming fiancée to the old she-monkey.

“Would you like to have them, **Nanda**?” the Buddha questioned him.

“Yes, Lord!” he childishly replied.

“Well, then, I guarantee that you will possess them if you persevere as I bid you.” Hearing that **Nanda Thera** was living the Holy Life with the object of winning heavenly nymphs, the Bhikkhus ridiculed him, calling him “hireling”. Eventually, he became ashamed of his base motive and by striving diligently, attained Arahantship.

THE BUDDHA AND PRINCE RĀHULA

On the seventh day after His arrival in **Kapilavatthu** Princess **Yasodharā** dressed up **Rāhula** and pointing to the Buddha, said,

“Behold, son, that great ascetic of majestic appearance. He is your father. Go up to him and ask for your inheritance.”

Young **Rāhula** came to His presence and asking for his inheritance, as advised by his mother, very affectionately said, “O ascetic, even your shadow is pleasing to me.”

After the noon meal he followed the Buddha, uttering much else

that was becoming. Nobody attempted to stop him. Nor did the Buddha prevent him from following Him. On arrival at the park the Buddha summoned the Venerable **Sāriputta** and said, “**Rāhula** asks me for his inheritance. I shall give him the seven-fold noble wealth which I received at the foot of the **Bodhi** tree and make him owner of an inheritance transcending this world. Ordain him, **Sāriputta**.”

Rāhula, who was then only seven years of age, was admitted into the Order.

King **Suddhodana** was deeply grieved to hear of this unexpected ordination of his beloved grandson. He came to the Buddha and humbly requested Him not to ordain any one without the prior consent of his parents. The Buddha granted the request.

There are several instructive Discourses preached specially to the Venerable **Rāhula**. Having come of age, he received the Higher Ordination and attained Arahantship in due time.

THE BUDDHA AND ĀNANDA

Ānanda was a cousin of the Buddha. He entered the Order together with the **Sākya** Nobles - **Anuruddha**, **Bhaddiya**, **Bhagu**, **Kimbila** and **Devadatta**. Hearing a Discourse from the Venerable **Mantāniputta** on the nature of things, he became a **Sotāpanna**.

As he possessed a powerful retentive memory and as he had the rare privilege of listening to all the Discourses of the Buddha owing to his close association with Him, he was later appointed the “Treasurer of the Dhamma” (**Dhamma-Bhāṇḍāgārika**). From the 55th year of the Buddha, until His **Parinibbāṇa** in the 80th year, the Venerable **Ānanda** ministered to all His needs, acting as His favourite attendant.

It was he who pleaded for the establishment of the Order of Nuns. At the First Council he was chosen to rehearse the Dhamma. Thus every **Sutta** begins with this words - '**Evam me sutam**', Thus have I heard."

As he was expected to take a leading part in the First Council which was composed only of Arahants, he strove hard and attained Arahantship on the night preceding the Convocation while he was about to lie down on his couch. It is stated that he was the only disciple who attained Arahantship free from the postures of sitting, standing, walking or sleeping.

THE BUDDHA AND DEVADATTA

Devadatta was the son of **Suppabuddha** and hence the cousin and brother-in-law of the Buddha. He entered the Order in the early part of the Buddha's ministry and was distinguished for psychic powers (**Iddhi**). Later, overcome by worldly gain and honour, he so completely changed his life that he became the greatest adversary of the Buddha. He once approached the Buddha and expressed his desire to lead the Order as the Teacher was old. The Buddha refused. **Devadatta** thereafter committed many an evil act for which he still suffers in **Avicī**.

Knowing perfectly well that the Buddha would not assent, but in order to make it a pretext to disparage the Buddha and thereby win the support of the ignorant folk, he requested the Buddha to enforce the following five rules:-

- (i) that monks should dwell all their lives in the forest; (ii) that they should live on alms begged; (iii) that they should wear **Pāmsukūla** robes (i.e., robes made from rags collected from the dust heap and cemeteries); (iv) that they should live at the foot of a tree; (v) that they should not eat fish or flesh throughout life.

The compassionate, far-seeing Buddha declared that those who wished were free to observe them, but He would not make them compulsory.

Devadatta made this refusal a weapon to cause a schism in the Order. Instigated by him, **Ajātasattu** caused the death of his innocent and devout father, King **Bimbisāra**.

Failing in all efforts to destroy the Buddha, finally **Devadatta** himself made an unsuccessful attempt to kill Him by hurling a rock from above on His head.

Book state that in the remote future he would become a **Pacceka** Buddha, named **Atthissara**, as a result of the Holy Life he led before his wicked career.

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1. ***Yamaka Pāṭihāriya** - often translated "The Twin Miracle" - is a psychic phenomenon which only Buddha can perform. By His psychic powers He makes fire and water issue from the pores of the body simultaneously.*
2. *He saluted Him for the first time when, to his surprise, he saw the infant prince's feet rest on the head of the ascetic **Asita** whom he wanted the child to revere. His second salutation took place at the Ploughing Festival when he saws the infant prince seated cross-legged on the couch absorbed in meditation.*

CHAPTER VII

THE BUDDHA'S MINISTRY

THE Buddha's successful ministry lasted 45 years. From His 35th year, the date of His Enlightenment, till His death in His 80th year, He served humanity both by example and precept, with no personal motive. Throughout the year He wandered from place to place, teaching the Dhamma to the people and liberating them from the bonds of **Samsāra**. During the Rainy Season (**Vassāna** - July to November) He lived in retirement, as was customary with all ascetics, owing to the incessant rains.

THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS

According to the **Buddhavamsa** commentary, His first twenty years were spent as follows:-

1st Year - Benares.

After preaching the **Dhammacakka Sutta** on the **Āsālha** full-moon day, He spent the first **Vassāna** (Retreat) in the Deer Park at **Isipatana**, near Benares. Here, there was no special building for Him to reside.

2nd, 3rd and 4th Years - **Rājagaha**.

When the Buddha visited King **Bimbisāra**, he offered his Bamboo Grove (**Veluvana**) to the Buddha and His disciples. This was an ideal solitary place for monks as it was neither too far nor too close to the city. Three rainy seasons were spent in this quiet grove.

5th Year - **Vesāli**.

During this year whilst He was residing in the Pinnacled Hall at **Mahāvana** near **Vesāli**, He heard of the impending death of King **Suddhodana** and repairing to his death-chamber preached the Dhamma to him. Immediately after he attained Arahantship, for seven days he enjoyed the bliss of Emancipation and passed away.

The Order of Nuns (Bhikkhuni Sāsana) was founded in the 5th **Vassāna** year of the Buddha. After the death of King **Suddhodana**, **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami**, desirous of joining the Order, approached the Buddha who was then residing at **Kapilavatthu** and begged permission for women to be admitted into the Order. For several reasons the Buddha refused and returned to **Vesāli**. But **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami**, without being discouraged, cut off her hair and wearing yellow garments, went on foot to **Vesāli**, accompanied by many other **Sākyan** ladies, experiencing many a hardship. Weeping, they stood outside the porch of the Pinnacled Hall in **Mahāvana** where the Buddha was residing. Venerable **Ānanda**, moved by the pathetic sight, appealed to the Buddha on their behalf. Again, He refused thrice, but was finally persuaded by the entreaties of Venerable **Ānanda** on condition that **Mahā Pajāpati Gotami** would agreed to observe the following eight Chief Rules:-

1. A nun, even of a hundred years' standing by **Upasampadā**, should salute a Bhikkhu and rise before him, though he had received the Higher Ordination that very day.
2. A nun should not spend a Retreat in a place where there is no Bhikkhu.
3. Every fortnight a nun should ask from the Order of monks the time of **Uposatha** meeting and when a Bhikkhu would come to admonish them.

4. The **Pavāraṇa** ceremony after the Retreat should be held by a nun in the presence of the Order of both Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis.
5. Major offences of a nun should be dealt with by the Order of both Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis.
6. A female novice (**Sikkhamānā**) who remains on probation for two years should receive the Higher Ordination from the Order of both Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis.
7. A nun should on no account rebuke or abuse a Bhikkhu.
8. Nuns should not give admonition to Bhikkhus, but Bhikkhus should admonish nuns.

Pajāpati Gotami gladly agreed to abide by these eight Chief Rules. By accepting them she automatically received the Lesser and Higher Ordination. The other **Sākyan** ladies also received their Lesser and Higher Ordination. All of them later attained Arahantship. **Yasodharā** and **Nandā**, the daughter of **Pajāpati Gotami**, were also admitted into the Order. In the Order of Nuns **Khemā** and **Uppalavannā** were appointed the two chief Female Disciples, as were **Sāriputta** and **Moggallāna** in the Order of Monks.

6th Year - **Maṅkula** Hill.

Just as He performed the “Twin Wonder” (**Yamaka Pātihāriya**) to overcome the pride of His relatives at **Kapilavatthu**, here too He did the same a second time to convert others.

7th Year - **Tāvatisa** Heaven.

A few days after the birth of the **Bodhisatta** his mother Queen **Mahā Māyā** died and was born as a Deva in the

Tāvātimsa Heaven. In this 7th year during the rainy three months, He preached the **Abhidhamma** to the Devas of this Celestial Plane, headed by His mother Deva. Daily He came to earth and gave a summary of His Sermon to the Venerable **Sāriputta**, who in turn expounded the same Doctrine in detail to his disciples. What is embodied in the present **Abhidhamma Piṭaka** is supposed to be this detailed exposition of the Dhamma by him. It is stated that on hearing these philosophical Discourse, the mother **Devā** attained the First Stage of Sainthood.

8th Year - **Bhesakāla** Forest, near **Sumsumāra** Rock, in the **Bhagga** District.

9th Year - **Kosambi**.

It was in this year that **Māgandiyā** harboured a grudge against the Buddha for what He uttered when her father proposed to give her in marriage to Him.

10th Year - **Pārileyyaka** Forest.

Owing to some unfortunate dispute that could not be settled between two parties of Bhikkhus, the Buddha retired to this forest for the Retreat. It was on this occasion, according to the story, that an elephant and a monkey ministered to His needs.

11th Year - **Ekanālā**, Brahmin village.

The interesting **Kasibhāradvāja Sutta** was delivered here.

12th Year - **Verañjā**.

During this period the Buddha and His disciples were compelled to live on food used for horses. The stay at **Verañjā** forms the introduction to the **Vinaya**.

13th Year - **Cāliya** Rock.

14th Year - **Jetavana** Monastery, **Sāvatti**.

The Venerable **Rāhula** received his Higher Ordination at this time on the completion of his 20th year.

15th Year - **Kapilavattu**.

The tragic death of King **Suppabuddha**, the father of Princess **Yasodharā**, occurred in this year. It should be noted that the Buddha spent only one Retreat in his birthplace.

16th Year - City of **Ālavaka**.

The conversion of **Ālavaka**, the demon, who feasted on human flesh, took place on this occasion.

17th Year - **Rājagaha**.

18th Year - **Cāliya** Rock.

19th Year - **Rājagaha**.

20th Year - **Rājagaha**.

ĀṄGULIMĀLA

It was in the 20th year that the Buddha converted the notorious murderer **Āṅgulimāla**. **Ahiṃsaka** - Innocent - was his original name. He belonged to a distinguished family and was the most illustrious and favourite pupil of his renowned teacher. Unfortunately, his associates grew jealous of him, concocted a false story and succeeded in poisoning the teacher against him. The enraged teacher, without any investigation, contrived to put an end to his life by ordering him to fetch a thousand fingers as a present. In

obedience to the teacher, though with great reluctance, he repaired to the forest and started killing people to collect fingers for the necessary offering. Later, he wore a garland of these fingers to ascertain the number - hence, the name **Āṅgulimāla**. When he had collected 999 fingers, so the books state and was ready to complete the number, the Buddha appeared on the scene. **Āṅgulimāla** made a vain attempt to kill the Buddha, but was eventually converted to the noble Dhamma and was admitted into the Order. One day, as he went on his alms-round he saw a woman in travail. Moved by compassion he reported this pathetic case to the Buddha who then taught the **Āṅgulimāla Paritta** which runs as follows:-

“Sister, since I was born in the Ariyan clan,² I know not that I consciously destroyed the life of any living being. By this truth may you be whole and may your child be whole!”

He studied this **Paritta** and going to the presence of the suffering sister, sat on a seat separated from her by a screen and made this Act of Truth. Instantly she was delivered of the child with great ease. The efficacy of this **Paritta** persists to this day.

In due course Venerable **Āṅgulimāla** attained Arahantship.

The remaining twenty-five years were spent in **Sāvatthi** at the **Jetavana** Monastery built by **Anāthapiṇḍika** the millionaire and at **Pubbārāma**, built by **Visākhā**, the chief benefactress of the Buddha.

ANĀTHAPIṆḌIKA

Anāthapiṇḍika, the Feeder of the Helpless, was a millionaire in **Sāvatthi**. His family name was **Sudatta**. In the course of a visit to his brother-in-law in **Rājagaha**, to his indescribable joy, he heard

that the Buddha was living in a forest close by. He was so eager to meet the Buddha that he rose up very early and proceeded to the spot, passing through a lonely cemetery. It seems that his faith in the Buddha was so intense that a light emanated from his body. With the aid of this light and the encouragement given to him by an invisible being in the cemetery, he reached **Sitavana** where the Buddha was walking up and down anticipating his visit. The Buddha summoned him to His presence, addressing him by his family name. He heard the Dhamma from the Buddha and became a **Sotāpanna**. Returning to **Sāvatthi** he bought the park belonging to Prince **Jeta**, covering, so the story goes, the whole site with gold coins and erected the famous **Jetavana** Monastery at great cost. Here the Buddha spent nineteen rainy seasons. This monastery, where the Buddha spent the major part of His life, was the scene of many of His Sermons.

Several Discourse which are of particular interest to laymen were delivered to him. Owing to his unparalleled generosity he was regarded as the chief lay supporter of the Buddha. It was on his suggestion that the **Ānanda Bodhi** Tree, which stands to this day, was planted at the entrance to the monastery.

His wife was **Puṇṇalakkhanā**. He had three good daughters - **Mahā Subhaddā**, **Cūla Subhaddā** and **Sumanā**. The elder had attained **Sotapanna**, whilst the youngest was a **Sakadāgāmi**. His only son **Kāla**, who was at first irreligious, later attained **Sotāpanna**, skilfully guided by his father.

Anāthapiṇḍika breathed his last after hearing a profound Discourse from the Venerable **Sāriputta**. After death he was reborn in the **Tusita** Heaven. Books state that on the very day he was reborn as a **Deva** he visited the Buddha at night and extolling the virtues of the Venerable **Sāriputta**, expressed his pleasure on seeing the Buddha and His disciples residing in his Monastery.

VISĀKHĀ

Visākhā was the devout daughter of **Dhanañjaya**, a millionaire. Her mother was **Sumanā** and her beloved grandfather was **Meṇḍaka**.

The Buddha happened to visit her birthplace when she was only seven years old. Though young in age, she was comparatively advanced in **Samsāra**. As such, when she heard the Dhamma from the Buddha for the first time, she became a **Sotāpanna**.

Books state that even in her prime she possessed masculine strength. Gifted with all womanly charms talented young **Visākhā** excelled both in worldly wisdom and spiritual insight.

She was given in marriage to a non-Buddhist named **Punṇavaddhana**, the son of a millionaire named **Migāra**. On the wedding day, in addition to a large dowry and an exquisitely rich ornament (**Mahālatā pilandhana**), ten admonitions were given to her. By her tact and patience she eventually succeeded in converting her husband's house to a happy Buddhist home. Her callous father-in-law was the first to become a **Sotāpanna** and embrace Buddhism. Thereafter she was left free to engage in her religious activities as she liked.

It was she who constructed the **Pubbārāma** in the east of **Sāvatthi**, as suggested by the Buddha. Here the Buddha spent six rainy seasons.

She became the most prominent lay female supporter of the Buddha and His disciples.

As a lady she played a very important part in many activities connected with the **Sāsana**. At times, she was even deputed by

the Buddha to settle disputes that arose amongst the Bhikkhunis. Some rules were laid down for Bhikkhus at her suggestion.

By her dignified conduct, refined manners, courteous speech, obedience and reverence to elders, compassion to her less fortunate ones and kind hospitality, she won the hearts of all who knew her.



1. *Abhidhamma* is the Higher Doctrine which deals with Buddhist philosophy.
2. That is, since his ordination as a Bhikkhu.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BUDDHA'S DAILY ROUTINE

THE Buddha performed His duties systematically in accordance with a pre-arranged plan. The whole day He was fully occupied with His religious work, except when He was attending to His essential physical needs. Though, on several occasions, He delivered Discourses that tend to worldly happiness. His main concern was the moral up-liftment of the people. Himself enlightened, He endeavoured His best to enlighten others.

His day was divided into five parts - namely, (i) the Forenoon Session, (ii) Afternoon Session, (iii) the First Watch, (iv) the Middle Watch and (v) the Last Watch.

THE FORENOON SESSION

Usually early in the morning He surveys the world with His Divine Eye to see whom He could help. If any person needs His assistance, uninvited He goes - on foot, as a rule, otherwise according to circumstances, exercising His psychic powers - and leads him or her on the right path. He went in search of the vicious and the impure; the virtuous and the pure came in search of Him.

Rendering any such spiritual service to whomsoever it is necessary, He proceeds on his alms-round, if He is not invited to any particular place, either alone or with the Bhikkhus. Before midday He finishes His meal.

Immediately after the meal He delivers a short Discourse to the people, establishes them in the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts

and if the persons are spiritually matured, they are shown the Path to Sainthood. At times He grants ordination if there are candidates for the Order. He then retires to the monastery.

THE AFTERNOON SESSION

After the noon meal He takes a seat in the monastery when Bhikkhus assemble to listen to His exposition of the Dhamma. Some get objects of meditation according to their temperaments and retire to congenial places. Others pay their due respects to Him and retire to their chambers to spend the afternoon. Having exhorted the disciples thus, He Himself retires to His private "Perfumed Chamber" to rest. If He so desires, He lies to His right side and sleeps for a while with mindfulness. On rising He attains to the Ecstasy of Great Compassion (**Mahā Karuṇā Samāpatti**) and surveys with His Divine Eye the world, especially the Bhikkhus who retired to solitude for meditation and others in order to give them any spiritual advice that is needed. If the erring ones that need advice happen to be at a distance, there He goes by His psychic powers, advises them and then retires to His chamber.

Towards evening the lay followers flock to Him to hear the Dhamma. Perceiving their innate tendencies and their temperaments with the Buddha-Eye, He preaches to them for about one hour.¹ Each member of the audience, though differently constituted, thinks that the Buddha's Sermon is directed particularly to him. Such was the Buddha's method of exposition of the Dhamma.

As a rule the Buddha converts others chiefly by expounding the Dhamma, for He appeals more to the intellect than to emotion. The Buddha advises the seekers of Truth not to accept anything merely on the authority of another, but to exercise their own reasoning and judge for themselves whether anything is right or wrong.

On one occasion the **Kālāmas** of **Kessaputta** approached the Buddha and said that many ascetics and Brahmins who come to preach to them used to exalt their own doctrines and denounce the doctrines of others and that they were at a loss to understand who of those worthies were speaking the truth and who were not.

“Yes, O **Kālāmas**, it is right for you to doubt, it is right for you to waver. In a doubtful matter wavering has arisen.”

Thus remarked the Buddha and gave them the following advice, which applies with equal force to the modern rationalists as it did to those sceptic Brahmins of yore.

“Come, O **Kālāmas**! Do not accept anything on (mere) hearsay. Do not accept anything on mere tradition. Do not accept anything on account of rumours. Do not accept anything just because it accords with your scriptures. Do not accept anything by mere supposition. Do not accept anything by merely considering the reasons. Do not accept anything merely because it agrees with your preconceived notions. Do not accept anything merely because it seems acceptable. Do not accept anything thinking that the ascetic is respected by us.

“But, **Kālāmas**, when you know for yourselves - these things are immoral; these things are blame-worthy; these things are censured by the wise; these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to ruin and sorrow - then, indeed, do you reject them.

“When, **Kālāmas**, when you know for yourselves - these things are moral; these things are blameless; these things are praised by the wise; these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to well-being and happiness - then do

you live acting accordingly.” These Words of the Buddha, uttered some 2,500 years ago, still retain their original force and freshness.

On rare occasions, as in the case of **Aṅgulināla**, **Khemā** and others, the Buddha resorts to His psychic powers.

The sublime Teachings of the Buddha appealed to all alike. There was milk for the babe and meat for the strong in His rational Teachings. Both rich and poor, high and low renounced their former faiths and embraced the new Message for Peace. The infant **Sāsana**, which began with five ascetics, soon developed into millions and peacefully spread throughout central India.

THE FIRST WATCH

This period of the night extends from 6 to 10 and is exclusively reserved for Bhikkhus. It is during this period that Bhikkhus get their doubts cleared, question the Buddha on the intricacies of the Dhamma, obtain suitable objects of meditation and hear the Dhamma from the Buddha.

THE MIDDLE WATCH

During this period which extends from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Celestial Beings such as Devas and Brahmas, who are invisible to ordinary human beings, approach the Buddha to question Him on the Dhamma. Several such Discourses and answers given to their queries appear mostly in the **Samyutta Nikāya**.

THE LAST WATCH

Then small hours of the morning extending from 2 to 6, which comprise the last watch, are divided into four parts.

The first part is devoted to pacing up and down (**Cankamana**). This serves as a mild physical exercise to Him.

During the second part (3 to 4), mindfully He sleeps lying to the right side. Throughout the third part (4 to 5) He attains the Fruit of Arahantship and enjoys Nibbanic Bliss. The last hour (5 to 6) He spends in attaining to the ecstasy of Great Compassion (**Mahā Karunā Samāpatti**). At this early hour He radiates thoughts of Loving-Kindness towards all beings and surveys the world with His Buddha-Eye to see whether He could be of service to any. If there be any worthy case, He goes of His own accord and gives the necessary spiritual assistance.

The whole day He is occupied with His religious activities. He sleeps only for one hour a day at night. For two solid hours in the noon and at dawn, He pervades the whole world with thoughts of **Mettā** (Loving-Kindness). He seeks His own food without inconveniencing any. Leading a life of voluntary poverty, begging His food from door to door, wandering from place to place for eight months throughout the year, He tirelessly worked in the foregoing manner till His eightieth year.



1. *Late in the evening, if He wishes, He takes a bath.*

CHAPTER IX

THE BUDDHA'S GREATNESS

THE Buddha was a unique Being. He was the profoundest of thinkers, the most persuasive of speakers, the most energetic of workers, the most successful of reformers, the most compassionate and tolerant of teachers, the most efficient of administrators and above all - the Holiest of Holies.

During the early period of His renunciation He sought the advice of distinguished religious teachers, but He could not obtain what He sought from outside sources. Circumstances compelled Him to think for Himself and seek within. He sought, He thought, He reflected; ultimately He found His goal of life. Having discovered the Truth, He opened the gates of Immortality to all who wish to hear Him and seek their Deliverance from this ever-recurring cycle of birth and death and not because He was an infant prodigy in the ordinarily accepted sense.

As He knew everything that ought to be known and as He obtained the key to all knowledge, He is called **Sabbaññū** - Omniscient. This knowledge He acquired by His own efforts as the result of a countless series of births.

What He taught was merely an infinitesimal part of what He knew. He taught only what was necessary for our Deliverance.

On one occasion, while the Buddha was residing in a forest, He took a handful of leaves and said, "O Bhikkhus, what I have taught you is comparable to the leaves in my hand, what I have not taught you is comparable to the number of leaves in the forest."

Daily He preached His Doctrine to both the Sangha (ordained disciples) and the laity. In the forenoon He goes in search of individuals who need His advice. Immediately after His noon meal He exhorts and instructs His ordained disciples. In the evening for about an hour He preaches to the layfolk who flock to hear Him. During the first watch of the night He again preaches to His ordained disciples. Throughout the middle watch He receives the Devas and other invisible beings and explains the Doctrine to them. Practising what He preached, He worked incessantly for forty-five long years for the good and happiness of all to His last moment.

THE BUDDHA AND THE CASTE SYSTEM

Very wisely and very effectively He laboured to eradicate the social evils that prevailed in His day. He vehemently protested against the caste system that blocked the progress of mankind.

In His opinion:-

“Birth makes no Brahman, nor non-Brahman makes;
‘Tis life doing that mould the Brahman true.
Their lives mould farmers, tradesmen, merchants, serfs;
Their lives mould robbers, soldiers, chaplains, kings.

“By birth is not one an outcast,
By Birth is not one a Brahman,
By deeds is one an outcast,
By deeds is one a Brahman.”

According to the Buddha, caste or colour does not preclude one from becoming a Buddhist or entering the Order. Fishermen, scavengers, courtesans, together with warriors and Brahmins, were freely admitted into the Order and enjoyed equal privileges and were equally given positions of rank.

Upāli,¹ the, barber, for instance, was made, in preference to all others, the chief in matters pertaining to the **Vinaya**. The timid **Sunīta**, the scavenger, was admitted by the Buddha Himself into the Order. The courtesan **Ambapālī** entered the Order and attained Arahantship. **Sāti**, the monk who maintained a deadly heresy, was the son of a fisherman. **Subhā** was the daughter of a smith. **Punnā** was a slave girl. **Cāpā** was the daughter of a deer-stalker. Such instances could be multiplied to show that the portals of Buddhism were wide open to all without any distinction.

It was also the Buddha who attempted to abolish slavery for the first time in the known history of the world.

THE BUDDHA AND WOMEN

The Buddha raised the status of women and brought them to a realization of their importance to society. He did not humiliate women but only regarded them as weak by nature. He saw the innate good of both men and women and assigned to them their due place in His Teaching. Sex is no obstacle to attaining Sainthood.

Sometimes the Pali term used to denote women is “**Mātugāma**”, which means “mother-folk” or “society of mothers”. As a mother, woman holds an honourable place in Buddhism. The wife is regarded as “the best friend” (**paramāsakhā**) of the husband.

Although at first the Buddha refused to admit women into the Order, yet later He was persuaded by the entreaties of the Venerable **Ānanda** and founded the Order of Bhikkhunis (Nuns).

Just as the Arahants **Sāriputta** and **Moggallāna** were made the two chief disciples in the Order of Monks, even so the Arahants **Khemā** and **Uppalavaṇṇā** were made the two chief female disciples in the Order of Nuns. Many other female disciples, too,

were named by the Buddha Himself as amongst His most distinguished and devout followers.

Women were placed under rather unfavourable circumstances before the advent of the Buddha and this new Order was certainly a great Blessing. In this Order queens, princesses, daughters of noble families, widows, bereaved mothers, helpless women, courtesans - all despite their caste or rank - met on a common platform, enjoyed perfect consolation and peace and breathed that free atmosphere which is denied to those confined in cottages and palatial mansions. Many who otherwise would have fallen into oblivion distinguished themselves in various and gained their emancipation by seeking refuge in the Order.

HIS TOLERANCE TOWARDS DUMB ANIMALS

The tolerance of the Buddha was extended not only to men and women but to dumb animals as well. For it was the Buddha who banned the sacrifice of poor beasts and admonished His followers to extend their Loving-Kindness (**Maitri**) to all living beings. No man has the right or power to destroy the life of another living animal even for the sake of one's stomach as life is precious to all.

HIS GREATNESS

The efficient way in which He maintained the discipline of His numerous followers, especially His orders of Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis, testifies to His unsurpassed administrative ability. He anticipated even the present Parliamentary system. Lord Zetland writes:-

“And it may come as a surprise to many to learn that in assemblies of Buddhists in India, two thousand years and more ago, are to be found the rudiments of our own Parliamentary practice of the present day.”

The most notable characteristic of the Buddha was His absolute purity and perfect holiness. He was so pure and so holy that He should be called "The Holiest of Holies". He was the perfect model of all the virtues He preached. His life had not a stain upon it."

On no occasion did the Buddha manifest any moral weakness. Everybody that came in contact with Him acknowledged His indisputable greatness and was deeply influenced by His magnetic personality. His will, wisdom, compassion, service, renunciation, perfect purity, exemplary personal life, the blameless methods that were employed to propagate the Dhamma and His final success - all these factors have contributed to hail the Buddha as the greatest religious Teacher that ever lived on earth.

Hindus honour Him as an incarnation of Vishnu. Christians have canonized Him as Saint Josphat (a corruption of Pali term **Bodhisatta**).² Muslims regard Him as a spiritual teacher. Rationalists treat Him as a great free-thinker.

H.G. Wells, the distinguished thinker, assigned to Him the first place amongst the seven great men in the world. The poet Tagore calls Him the Greatest Man ever born.

Fausboll, a Russian admirer, says, "The more I know Him, the more I love Him."

A humble follower would say, "The more I know Him, the more I love Him; the more I love Him, the more I know Him."



1. *It was he who rehearsed the Vinaya at the First Council.*
2. *See Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics Vol. 7 p. 567; and Prof. T. W. Rhys Davids' Buddhist Birth Stories.*

CHAPTER X

THE BUDDHA'S PARINIBBABA

THE Buddha reached His eightieth year. His death was drawing near. His two chief disciples - the Venerable **Sāriputta** and **Moggallāna** - had predeceased Him. So had Venerable **Rāhula** and **Yasodharā** .

One day, He addressed the Venerable **Ānanda** and said:-

“**Ānanda**, whosoever has fully developed the Four Paths of Accomplishment¹ (**Iddhipāda**) could, if he so desires, remain in the same birth for a **Kappa**² or for a **Kappa** and a little more. Now the **Tathāgata** has thoroughly practised and developed them and he could, therefore, should he desire it, live on yet for a **Kappa** or for a **Kappa** and a little more.”

But the Venerable **Ānanda** could not comprehend the meaning of this statement as his heart was possessed by the Evil One. He did not beseech the Buddha, saying -

“Vouchsafe, Lord, to remain during the **Kappa**! Live on through the **Kappa**, O Happy One, for the good and happiness of the many”

For the second and third time the Buddha made the same statement. Still, the Venerable **Ānanda** was silent.

MĀRA³

When the Venerable **Ānanda** left Him. **Māra** approached the Buddha and invited Him to pass away. The Buddha replied:-

“O Evil One! Make thyself happy, the death of the **Tathāgata** shall take place before long. At the end of three months from this time the **Tathāgata** will pass away,”

Immediately after, the Buddha consciously and deliberately rejected the rest of His allotted term of life.

Later, the Buddha mentioned this matter to the Venerable **Ānanda**, who then reminded Him of His previous utterance and besought Him to remain for a **Kappa**.

“Enough, **Ānanda**, beseech not the **Tathāgata**! The time for making such a request is past. If thou shouldst then have so besought the **Tathāgata**, the **Tathāgata** might have rejected the appeal even for the second time, but the third time he would have granted it. Thine, therefore, **Ānanda**, is the fault, thine is the offence,” replied the Buddha.

AN EXHORTATION

On another occasion the Buddha summoned all His disciples and addressed them thus:-

“Behold, O disciples, now I speak to you. Transient are all component things. Strive on with diligence. In no long time the Final Release of the Accomplished One will take place. After the lapse of three months from now, the Accomplished One will attain **Parinibbāna**.

“Ripe is my age; short is my life. Leaving you I shall go. I have made myself my refuge. Be diligent, O disciples, mindful and virtuous. With thoughts collected, guard your minds. He who lives strenuously in this Dispensation will escape the cycle of rebirth and put an end to suffering.”

**THE VENERABLE DHAMMĀRĀMA'S HIGH REGARD
FOR THE BUDDHA**

The ordinary disciples were deeply grieved to hear that the Buddha would pass away in three short months. They came in large numbers to pay their last respects to Him. One Bhikkhu named **Dhammārāma** refrained from joining them. This matter was reported to the Buddha and he was summoned to His presence. When questioned as to his absence the loyal and dutiful Bhikkhu remarked:-

“Lord, I knew that Your Reverence would pass away three months, hence and I thought the best way of honouring the Teacher was by attaining Arahantship even before the decease of Your Reverence.”

“Excellent, excellent! He who loves me should emulate this Bhikkhu. He honours me best who practises my Teaching best,” said the Buddha in extolling the praise-worthy conduct of that exemplary Bhikkhu.

THE BUDDHA'S LAST MEAL

Cunda the smith, a rich and devoted person, heard that the Buddha had arrived at **Pāvā** and was staying in his mango grove. He went up to Him and after listening to a very instructive Discourse, invited the Buddha and His disciples for the noon meal on the following day.

The Buddha assented by His silence.

Cunda, after that night was over, made ready in his house choice food both hard and soft, together with a large quantity of **Sūkaramaddava**⁴ and intimated the time to the Blessed One, saying, “It is time, O Lord! Alms are ready.”

Then the Blessed One dressed Himself in the forenoon and taking bowl and robe, went together with the company of disciples to the abode of **Cunda** and sat on the prepared seat. Seated thus, the Buddha addressed **Cunda** as follows:-

“O **Cunda**, serve me with that **Sūkaramaddava** which you have prepared; but serve the company of disciples with other food - both hard and soft.”

“So be it, Lord!” replied **Cunda** and did accordingly.

Thereupon, the Blessed One said to **Cunda**:

“Whatsoever, **Cunda**, remains of the **Sūkaramaddava**, bury that in a hole in the ground; for, **Cunda**, I perceive not in this world of gods, **Mārās** and Brahmas and amongst other beings, together with ascetics and priests and gods and men, anyone who could eat this food and well digest it, save the Accomplished One.”

“So be it, Lord!” responded **Cunda** and buried the remainder of that **Sūkaramaddava** in a hole in the ground and approaching the Blessed One, respectfully saluted Him and sat on one side. As he was seated thus, the Blessed One gladdened him with a religious discourse and departed.

Then arose in the Blessed One, who partook of the meal of **Cunda**, a grievous sickness, dysentery and severe pains, resembling those of death. But the Blessed One, conscious and reflective, bore them up unflinchingly.

Thereupon the Blessed One proceeded to **Kusinārā**, accompanied by the Venerable **Ānanda**.

HIS LAST CONVERT

At that time there lived at **Kusinārā** a wandering ascetic named **Subhadda**. He heard the news that the ascetic **Gotama** would attain **Parinibbāṇa** in the last watch of the night and he thought of seeing Him. So he went to the **Upavattana Sāla** Grove of the **Māllās** and inquired of the Venerable **Ānanda** whether he could see the Buddha.

“Enough, friend **Subhadda**, do not worry the Accomplished One. The Blessed One is wearied.”

For the second and third time **Subhadda** made his request and for the second and third time, the Venerable **Ānanda** replied in the same manner.

The Buddha overheard their conversation and addressing **Ānanda**, said, “Nay, **Ānanda**, do not prevent **Subhadda** from entering. Let **Subhadda** behold the Accomplished One. Whatsoever **Subhadda** will ask of me, all that will be with the desire for knowledge and not to annoy me. And, whatever I shall say in answer, he will readily understand.”

Permission being thus granted, **Subhadda** approached the Buddha and exchanging friendly greetings with Him, spoke to Him as follows:-

“There are these ascetics and priests, O **Gotama**, who are leaders of companies and congregations, who are heads of sects and are well-known, renowned religious teachers, esteemed as good men by the multitude - as, for instance, **Pūraṇa Kassapa**, **Makkhali Gosāla**, **Ajita Kesakambali**, **Pakudha Kaccāyana**, **Saṅjaya Belaṭṭhiputta**, **Niganṭha Nātaputta**. Have they all, as they

themselves claim, thoroughly understood or not or have some of them understood and some not”

“Let it be so, **Subhadda**! Trouble not yourself as to whether all or some have understood or not. I shall teach the Doctrine to you. Listen and bear it well in mind. I shall speak.”

“So be it, Lord!” replied **Subhadda**.

The Blessed One spoke as follows:-

“In whatever Dispensation there exists not the Noble Eightfold Path, neither is the first **Samana**, nor the second, nor the third, nor the fourth,⁵ to be found therein. In whatever Dispensation there exists the Noble Eightfold Path, there are also to be found the first **Samana**, the second **Samana**, the third **Samana** and the fourth **Samana**. In this Dispensation there exists the Noble Eightfold Path. Here, indeed, are found the first **Samana**, the second **Samana**, the third **Samana** and the fourth **Samana**. The other foreign schools are empty of **Samana**. If, O **Subhadda**, the disciples live rightly, the world would not be void of Arahants.

“My age was twenty-nine when I went forth as a seeker after what is good. Now, one and fifty years are gone since I was ordained. O **Subhadda**. Outside the fold there is not a single ascetic who acts even partly in accordance with this realizable Doctrine.”

Subhadda then praised the Buddha for His lucid exposition of the Noble Dhamma and seeking refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, expressed his desire to receive the Lesser and the Higher Ordination.

The Buddha said:-

“Whosoever, **Subhadda**, being already committed to the other doctrines, desires the Lesser and Higher Ordination in this Dispensation, remains on probation for four months. At the end of four months, the disciples approving, he is ordained and raised to the status of a Bhikkhu. Nevertheless, with discretion I make individual exceptions.”

Subhadda agreed to abide by the regulation, but the Buddha requested the Venerable **Ānanda** to ordain **Subhadda**.

In the presence of the Blessed One, **Subhadda**⁶ received the Lesser and Higher Ordination and before long attained Arahantship.

He was the last personal convert of the Buddha.

THE LAST SCENE

The Buddha addressed **Ānanda** and said:-

“It may be, **Ānanda**, that you will say thus:- ‘Without the teacher is the sublime teaching. There is no teacher for us.’ Nay, **Ānanda**, you should not think thus. That Doctrine and Discipline taught and promulgated by me, **Ananda**, will be your teacher when I am gone.”

The Buddha addressed the disciples and said:-

“If, O disciples, there be a doubt or perplexity in any disciple with regard to the Buddha, the Doctrine, the Order and the Practice, question me (now) and repent not afterwards thinking - ‘We were face to face with the Teacher, yet were not able to question the Buddha in His presence.’”

When He spoke thus, the disciples were silent.

For the second and third time the Buddha addressed the disciples the same way. And, for the second and third time the disciples were silent. Then, the Buddha addressed the disciples and said:- “Perhaps it may be out of respect for the Teacher that you do not question me. Let a friend, O disciples, intimate it to another.”

Still, the disciples were silent.

Thereupon the Venerable **Ānanda** spoke to the Buddha as follows:-

“Wonderful, Lord! Marvellous, Lord! Thus am I pleased with this company of disciples. There is not a single disciple who entertains a doubt or perplexity with regard to the Buddha, the Doctrine, the Order and the Practice.”

“You speak through faith, **Ānanda**.⁷ With regard to this matter there is knowledge in the Accomplished One, that in this company of disciples there is not a single disciple who entertains a doubt or perplexity with regard to the Buddha, the Doctrine, the Order and Practice. Of these five hundred disciples, **Ānanda**, he who is the last is a Stream-Winner, not subject to fall, but sure of and destined for, Enlightenment.”

Then the Blessed One addressed the disciples and said:-

“Behold, O disciples, I exhort you. Subject to decay are all component things. Strive on with diligence.”

These were the last words of the Buddha.

THE BUDDHA’S LAST MOMENT

The Buddha’s life was drawing to an end. For the last time He

rested on the couch placed between two **Sāla** trees in the **Upavattana Sāla** Grove. His disciples were surrounding him in perfect silence.

The Buddha attained to the First Ecstasy (**Jhāna**).⁸ Emerging from it He attained, in order to the Second,⁹ Third and Fourth Ecstasies. Emerging from the Fourth Ecstasy. He attained to the “Realm of Infinity of Space” (**Ākāśānañcāyatana**).¹⁰ Emerging from this He attained to the “Realm of Infinity of Consciousness” (**Viññānañcāyatana**).¹⁰ Emerging from this He attained to the “Realm of Nothingness” (**Ākiñcaññāyatana**).¹⁰ Emerging from this He attained to the “Realm of Neither Perception nor Non-Perception” (**N’eva Saññā N’Āsaññāyatana**).¹⁰ Emerging from this He attained to the “Cessation of Perceptions and Sensations” (**Saññāvedayita-Nirodha**).

Instantly the Venerable **Ānanda**, who was anxiously observing the dying state of the Buddha, remarked that the Buddha had passed away. The Venerable **Anuruddha**, who was distinguished for his Divine Eye, explained that the Buddha had attained to the “Cessation of Perceptions and Sensations”.

Then the Buddha emerged from that State and attained in order to the Fourth, Third, Second and First **Arūpa Jhānas**. Emerging from these He again attained in order to the Fourth, Third, Second and First **Rūpa Jhānas**. Emerging from these He attained in order to the Second, Third and Fourth **Rūpa Jhānas**. Immediately emerging from this Fourth Ecstasy the Buddha finally passed away.

As a man He was born. As an extraordinary man He lived. As a Buddha He passed away.



A Manual of Buddhism

1. The Four *Iddhipādas* are - Will (*Chanda*), Effort (*Viriya*), Thought (*Citta*) and Investigation (*Vimaṃsā*).
2. *Kappa* here means the life-term which was about 100 to 120 years.
3. There are five kinds of *Māras* - namely, i. Deity *Māra* (*Devaputta*), ii. Passions (*Kilesa*), iii. Kammic Activities (*Abhisaṅkhāra*), iv. Aggregates (*Khandha*), v. Death (*Maccu*).
4. *Sūkaramaddava* - According to the Commentary it is tender boar's flesh. Some say it is a kind of mushroom. See *Questions of Milinda* - Vol. 1, p. 224 and *Dialogues of the Buddha Part 2*, p. 137. Note 1.
5. The First *Samana* is the *Sotāpanna* (Stream-Winner), the Second is the *Sakadāgāmi* (Once-Returner), the Third is the *Anāgāmi* (Never-Returner) and the Fourth is the Arahant (Worthy One) who is the Perfect Saint.
6. This *Subhadda*, the wandering ascetic, should be distinguished from *Subhadda* who entered the Order in his old age and who remarked that the death of the Buddha was no occasion for sorrow as it left the Bhikkhus free to do whatever they liked without being bound by the injunctions of the Master. That unexpected remark prompted the Venerable *Kassapa* to take immediate steps to hold a convocation of the Dhamma and Vinaya.
7. The reference was to the Venerable *Ānanda* who, encouraged by these words, attained Arahantship later.
8. *Jhāna* (Ecstasy or Absorption) is a developed state of mental concentration. Literally, it means the burning up of passions or focussing the mind on one object.
9. These are the four *Rūpa Jhānas*.
10. These are the four *Arūpa Jhānas*.

CHAPTER XI

KAMMA

Kamma (Sanskrit - **Karma**) literally means actions of deed. In its ultimate sense **Kamma** means good and bad volition (**Kusala Akusala Cetanā**).

Every volitional action, except that of a Buddha or of an Arahant, is called **Kamma**. The Buddhas and Arahants do not accumulate fresh **Kamma** as they have destroyed all their passions. In other words, **Kamma** is the law of moral causation. It is action and reaction in the ethical realm.

Kamma does not necessarily mean past action only; it may be both present and past actions. It is not fate. Nor is it predestination which is imposed on us by some mysterious unknown power to which we must helplessly submit ourselves. It is one's own doing which reacts on one's own self and so it is possible for us to divert the course of our **Kamma**.

Kamma is action and **Vipāka**, fruit, is its reaction. It is the cause and the effect. Like a mango seed is **Kamma**, **Vipāka**, effect, is like the mango fruits arising from the tree. The leaves and flowers are like the **Vipākānisamsa** - inevitable consequences.

As we sow, we reap either in this life or in a future birth. What we reap today is what we have sown either in the present or in the past. **Kamma** is a law in itself. But it does not follow that there should be a law-giver. Ordinary laws of nature e.g. gravitation, need no law-giver. The law of **Kamma**, too, demands no law-giver. It operates in its own field without the intervention of an

external, independent ruling agency. Inherent in **Kamma** is the potentiality of producing its due effect. The cause produces the effect; the effect explains the cause. The seed produces the fruit; the fruit explains the seed and both are inter-related. Even so, **Kamma** and its effect are inter-related; “the effect already blooms in the cause”.

KUSALA KAMMA

There are ten kinds of **Kusala Kamma** or meritorious actions.¹
They are:-

- (1) Generosity (**Dāna**), which yields wealth.
- (2) Morality (**Sīla**), which gives birth in noble families and in states of happiness.
- (3) Meditation (**Bhāvanā**), which gives birth in Realms of Form and Formless Realms and which tends to gain Higher Knowledge and Emancipation.
- (4) Reverence (**Apacāyana**), the cause of noble parentage.
- (5) Service (**Veyyāvacca**), which tends to produce a large retinue.
- (6) Transference of merit (**Pattidāna**), which serves as a cause to give in abundance in future births.
- (7) Rejoicing in others' merit (**Pattānumodanā**), which is productive of merit wherever one is born.
- (8) Hearing the Doctrine (**Dhammasavana**), which promotes wisdom.

(9) Expounding the Doctrine (**Dhammadesanā**), which promotes wisdom.

(10) Straightening of one's own views (**Diṭṭhiḥju-kamma**), which strengthens one's confidence.

These ten are sometimes treated as twelve. The Praising of Others' Good Actions (**Pasamsā**) is added to Rejoicing in Other's Merit; and Taking the Three Refuges (**Saraṇa**) and Mindfulness (**Anussati**) are used instead of Straightening of One's Views. Praising others' good deeds results in getting praise to oneself. The seeking of the Three Refuges results in the destruction of passions. "Mindfulness" promotes diverse forms of happiness.

The Five **Rūpa Jhānas** and the Four **Arūpa Jhānas** are also regarded as **Kusala Kamma** pertaining to the Realms of Form and the Formless Realms respectively.

AKUSALA KAMMA

There are ten **Akusala Kammās** or evil actions, which are caused by deed, word and thought.

Three are caused by deed - namely, killing (**Pāṇātipāta**), stealing (**Adinnādāna**) and unchastity (**Kāmesumicchācāra**).

Four are caused by word - namely, lying (**Musāvāda**), slandering (**Pisunāvāca**), harsh speech (**Pharusāvāca**) and frivolous talk (**Samphappalāpa**).

Three are caused by mind - namely, covetousness (**Abhiḥjhā**), ill-will (**Vyāpāda**) and false view (**Micchādiṭṭhi**)

Killing means the destruction of any living being. The **Pāli** term

Papa strictly means the psycho-physical life pertaining to one's particular existence. The speedy destruction of this life force, without allowing it to run its due course, is **Pāṇātipāta**. Animals are also included in living beings, but not plants.

The following five conditions are necessary to complete this evil of killing:- (i) a being, (ii) consciousness that it is a being, (iii) intention of killing, (iv) effort and (v) consequent death.

The evil effects of killing are:- short life, diseasedness, constant grief caused by separation from the loved and constant fear.

Five conditions are necessary to complete the evil of stealing - namely, (i) another's property, (ii) consciousness that it is so, (iii) intention of stealing, (iv) effort and (v) consequent removal.

The evil effects of stealing are:- poverty, wretchedness, unfulfilled desires and dependent livelihood.

Four conditions are necessary to complete the evil of unchastity - namely, (i) the mind to enjoy the forbidden object, (ii) the attempt to enjoy, (iii) devices to obtain and (iv) possession.

The evil effects of unchastity are:- having many enemies, getting undesirable wives, birth as a woman or as an eunuch.

Four conditions are necessary to complete the evil of lying - namely, (i) an untrue thing, (ii) intention to deceive, (iii) the corresponding effort, (iv) the communication of the matter to others.

The evil effects of lying are:- being tormented by abusive speech, being subject to vilification, incredibility and a stinking mouth.

Four conditions are necessary to complete the evil of slandering -

namely, (i) persons that are to be divided, (ii) the intention to separate them or the desire to endear oneself to one of them, (iii) corresponding effort and (iv) the communication.

The evil effect of slandering is the dissolution of friendship without sufficient cause.

Three conditions are necessary to complete the evil of harsh speech - namely, (i) a person to be abused, (ii) angry thought and (iii) the abuse.

The evil effects of harsh speech are:- being detested by others though absolutely blameless and a harsh voice.

Two conditions are necessary to complete the evil of frivolous talk - namely, (i) the inclination towards frivolous talk and (ii) its narration.

The evil effects of frivolous talk are:- defective bodily organs and incredible speech.

Covetousness has the characteristic mark of thinking "Ah, would this property be mine!" The two conditions necessary to complete this evil are:- (i) another's property and (ii) adverting to it, saying, "Would this be mine!"

The evil effect of covetousness is non-fulfilment of one's wishes.

Two conditions are necessary to complete the evil of ill-will - namely, (i) another being and (ii) the thought of doing harm.

The evil effects of ill-will are:- ugliness, manifold diseases and a detestable nature.

False view is seeing things wrongly. False beliefs, like the denial of the efficacy of deeds etc. are also included in this evil. Two conditions are necessary to complete this evil - namely, (i) perverted manner in which the object is viewed and (ii) the understanding of it according to that mis-conception.

The evil effects of false view are:- base attachment, lack of wisdom, dull wit, chronic diseases and blame-worthy ideas.

THE CAUSE OF KAMMA

Not knowing things as they truly are does one accumulate **Kamma**. No **Kamma** is accumulated by one who has completely eradicated craving and has understood things as they truly are. Ignorance (**Avijjā**) and craving (**Tanhā**) are the chief causes of **Kamma**.

THE DOER OF KAMMA

Who is the doer of **Kamma**? Who reaps the fruit of **Kamma**?

Says the Venerable **Buddhaghosa** in the **Visuddhi Magga**:-

“No doer is there who does the deed,
Nor is there one who feels the fruit.”

In the ultimate sense a Buddhist cannot conceive of any unchanging entity, any being in the form of a **Deva**, a man or an animal. These forms are merely the temporary manifestations of the Kammic force. The term “being” is only used for conventional purposes. Strictly speaking, what we call “a being” is only composed of mind and matter.

Buddhists believe that there is no actor apart from action, no perceiver apart from perception, no conscious subject behind consciousness.

Volition or will (**cetanā**) is itself the doer of **Kamma**. Apart from these mental states, there is none to sow and none to reap.

WHERE IS KAMMA?

“Where, Venerable Sir, is **Kamma**?” questions King **Milinda** from the Venerable **Nāgasena**.

“O **Mahārāja**,” replies the Venerable **Nāgasena**, “**Kamma** is not stored somewhere in this fleeting consciousness or in any other part of the body. But, dependent on mind and matter, it rests, manifesting itself as the opportune moment, just as mangoes are not said to be stored somewhere in the mango tree, but dependent on the mango tree they lie springing up in due season.”

Just as wind or fire is not stored in any particular place, even so **Kamma** is not stored anywhere within or without the body.

Kamma is an individual force which is transmitted from one existence to another.

CLASSIFICATION OF KAMMA

There are moral and immoral actions which may produce their due effects in this very life. They are called “Immediately Effective (**Diṭṭhadhammavedaniya**) **Kamma**.” If they do not operate in this life, they become “ineffective” (**Ahosi**).

There are some actions which may produce their effects in a subsequent life. They are termed “Subsequently Effective (**Upapajjavedaniya**) **Kamma**”. They, too, become ineffective if they do not operate in the second birth.

Those actions that may produce their effects in any life in the course

of one's wandering in **Samsāra**, are known as "Indefinitely Effective (**Aparāpariyavedaniya**) **Kamma**".

This classification of **Kamma** is with reference to the time in which effects are worked out.

There are four classes of **Kamma** according to Function (**Kicca**).

Every birth is conditioned by past good and bad **Kamma** that predominates at the moment of death. The **Kamma** that conditions the future birth is called "Reproductive (**Janaka**) **Kamma**".

Now another **Kamma** may step forward to assist or maintain the action of this Reproductive **Kamma**. Just as this **Kamma** has the tendency to strengthen the Reproductive **Kamma**, some other action which tends to weaken, interrupt or retard the fruition of the Reproductive **Kamma**, may step in. Such actions are respectively termed "Supportive (**Upatthambhaka**) **Kamma**" and "Counteractive (**Upapīḍaka**) **Kamma**".

According to the law of **Kamma**, the potential energy of the Reproductive **Kamma** could be nullified by a more powerful opposing **Kamma** of the past, which, seeking an opportunity, may quite unexpectedly operate, just as a powerful opposing force can check the path of the flying arrow and bring it down to the ground. Such an action is called "Destructive (**Upaghātaka**) **Kamma**", which is more effective than Supportive and Counteractive **Kamma** in that it not only obstructs but also destroys the whole force.

There are four classes of **Kamma** according to the priority of effect.

The first is **Garuka**, which means weighty or serious. This **Kamma**, which is either good or bad, produces results in this life or in the next for certain. If good, it is purely mental as in the case of **Jhāna**

(Ecstasies). Otherwise, it is verbal or bodily. The five kinds of Weighty **Kamma** are:-

- (i) Matricide, (ii) Parricide, (iii) the Murder of an Arahant, (iv) the Wounding of a Buddha, (v) the Creation of a Schism in the Sangha.

Permanent Scepticism (**Niyāta Micchādiṭṭhi**) is also termed one of the Weighty **Kammas**.

In the absence of a Weighty **Kamma** to condition the next birth, a death-proximate **Kamma** (**Āsanna**) might operate. This is the **Kamma** one does immediately before the dying moment.

Habitual (**Ācinna**) **Kamma** is the next in priority of effect. It is the **Kamma** that one habitually performs and recollects and for which one has a great liking.

The fourth is the “Cumulative (**Kaṭattā**) **Kamma**”, which embraces all that cannot be included in the above three. This is as it were the reserve fund of a particular being.



The last classification is according to the place in which the **Kamma** effects transpire, namely:-

- (i) Evil **Kamma** (**Akusala**), which may ripen in the Sentient Plane (**Kāmaloka**).
- (ii) Good **Kamma** (**Kusala**), which may ripen in the Sentient Plane.
- (iii) Good **Kamma**, which may ripen in the Realm of Form (**Rūpaloka**).
- (iv) Good **Kamma**, which may ripen in the Formless Realms (**Arūpaloka**).

IS EVERYTHING DUE TO **KAMMA**?

Although Buddhism attributes the inequality of mankind to **Kamma** as one of the chief causes amongst a variety, yet it does not assert that everything is due to **Kamma**.

If everything is due to **Kamma**, a person would always be bad if it was his **Kamma** to be bad. One would not need to consult a physician to be cured of a disease; for if one's **Kamma** was such, one would be cured.

According to Buddhism there are five orders or processes (**Niyāmas**) which operate in the physical and mental realms.

1. **Utu Niyāma**, physical inorganic order e.g. the seasonal phenomena of winds and rains, the unerring order of seasons, characteristic seasonal changes and events, the causes of wind and rains, the nature of heat, etc.
2. **Bija Niyāma**, (physical organic order) order of germs and seeds; e.g. rice produced from rice seed, sugar taste resulting from sugar-cane or honey, the peculiar characteristics of certain fruits, etc. The scientific theory of cells and genes and the physical similarity of twins may be ascribed to this order.
3. **Kamma Niyāma** order of act and result; e.g. desirable and undesirable acts produce corresponding good and bad results. As surely as water seeks its own level, so does **Kamma**, given opportunity, produce its inevitable result - not in the form of reward or punishment but as an innate sequence. This sequence of deed and effect is as natural and necessary as the way of the sun and the moon.

4. **Dhamma Niyāma** order of the norm; e.g. the natural phenomena occurring at the advent of a **Bodhisatta** in his last birth. Gravitation and other similar laws of nature, the reason for being good and so forth, may be included in this group.

5. **Citta Niyāma** order of mind or psychic law; e.g. processes of consciousness, arising and perishing of consciousness, constituents of consciousness, power of mind, etc. telepathy, telesthesia, retrocognition, premonition, clairvoyance, clairauidence, thought reading - all psychic phenomena which are inexplicable to modern science are included in this class.

Every mental or physical phenomenon could be explained by these all-embracing five orders or processes which are laws in themselves. **Kamma** is, therefore, only one of the five universal laws that account for the diversity in the world.

It is the Doctrine of **Kamma** that gives consolation, hope, self-reliance and moral courage to a Buddhist.

This belief in **Kamma** “validates his effort and kindles his enthusiasm” because it teaches individual responsibility.

This law of **Kamma** explains the problem of suffering, the mystery of so-called fate and predestination of other religions and above all, the inequality of mankind.

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1. *Abstinence from ten Akusala Kamma is also explained as Kusala Kamma*
2. *For details, see the writer's Buddha-Dhamma and The Life of the Buddha and His Teachings.*

CHAPTER XII

REBIRTH

KAMMA necessarily leads to rebirth. Past **Kamma** conditions the present birth and present **Kamma**, in combination with past **Kamma**, the future. The present is the offspring of the past and becomes in its turn, the parent of the future.

The present needs no proof. The past is based on memory and reports and the future on forethought and inferences.

REASONS TO BELIEVE IN A PAST BIRTH

The greatest authority on rebirth is the Buddha. Says He:- “With clairvoyant vision, purified and supernormal, I perceived beings disappearing from one state of existence and re-appearing in another. I beheld the base and the noble, the beautiful and the ugly, the happy and the miserable, passing according to their deeds.”

There was no reason for the Buddha to tell an untruth to deceive His followers.

Following His instructions His disciples also developed this retrocognitive knowledge and were able to read their past lives to a great extent.

The development of this supernormal vision is not restricted only to the Buddha and His disciples. Any person, whether Buddhist or not, could possess this faculty. Some Indian Rishis, even before the advent of the Buddha, developed such powers as clairauidence, clairvoyance, thought reading and so forth. There are also some

persons who, according to the laws of association, spontaneously develop the memory of their past birth and remember fragments of their previous lives.

A few well-attested cases are reported from Burma, India, Germany, England, etc. Extraordinary experiences of some modern reliable psychists and strange cases of alternating and multiple personalities tend to throw light upon this belief in rebirth.

This phenomenon of secondary personalities has to be explained either as remnants of past individual experiences or as "being possessed". The former explanation sounds more reasonable, but the latter cannot totally be discarded.

In hypnotic states some can relate experiences of their past lives; while a few others, like Edgar Casey of America, were able not only to read the past lives of others but also to heal diseases.

Sometimes we go through strange experiences which cannot be explained but by rebirth. How often do we meet persons whom we have never before met and yet inwardly feel that they are quite familiar to us? How often do we visit new places and yet feel impressed that we are perfectly acquainted with their surroundings?

In this world there arise Perfect Ones like the Buddhas highly developed personalities. Could they evolve suddenly? Could they be the products of a single existence?

How are we to account for colossal characters like Confucius, Pardini, Homer and Plato, men of genius like **Kālidāsa**, Shakespeare, infant prodigies like Ramanujan, Pascal, Mozart, Beethoven, Raphael, and others, and little children conversant with different languages and certain subjects which they had never learnt in their present life?¹

Heredity alone cannot account for them, “else their ancestry would disclose it, their posterity, even greater than themselves, demonstrate it.” Could they rise to such lofty heights if they had not lived such noble lives and gained similar experiences in the past?

Is it by mere chance that they are born of those particular parents and placed under those favourable circumstances? The theory of heredity should be supplemented by the Doctrine of **Kamma** and rebirth for an adequate explanation of these puzzling problems.

Is it reasonable to believe that the present brief span of life is the only existence between two eternities of heaven and hell?

The few years we are privileged to spend here, for the most five score years, must certainly be an inadequate preparation for eternity. If one believes in the present and in future, it is quite logical to believe in the past.

If there be reasons to believe that we have existed in the past, then surely there are no reasons to disbelieve that we shall continue to exist after our present life has apparently ceased.

It is indeed a strong argument in favour of past and future lives that “in this world virtuous persons are very often unfortunate and vicious persons prosperous.”³

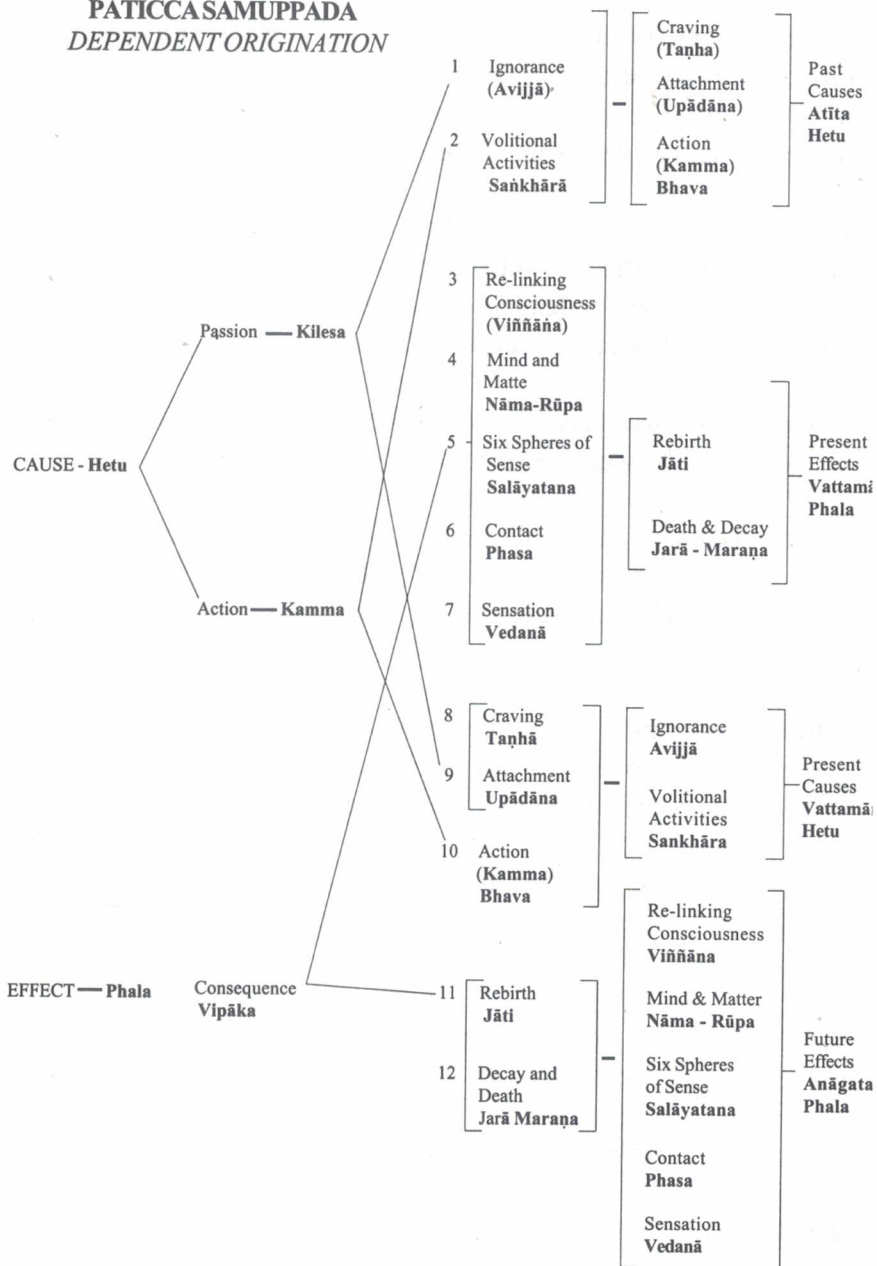
Some discoveries of modern spiritualists also tend to prove the existence of a future birth.

THE CAUSE OF THIS REBIRTH PROCESS

THE WHEEL OF LIFE

In short, **Kamma**, which is rooted in Ignorance, is the cause of

PATICCA SAMUPPĀDA DEPENDENT ORIGINATION



birth and death. As long as this **Kammic** force survives there is rebirth. This process of becoming is fully explained in the **Paṭicca Samuppāda** (Dependent Arising or Dependent Origination).

It should be understood that **Paṭicca Samuppāda** is only a Discourse on **Samsāra**⁴ or the process of birth and death and not a theory of the evolution of the world from primordial matter. It deals with the cause of rebirth and suffering, but it does not attempt to show the absolute origin of life.

Ignorance (**Avijjā**) of the Four Noble Truths is the first link or cause of the wheel of life. It clouds all right understanding. Dependent on Ignorance arise volitional activities (**Sanḥāra**). Moral and immoral activities, whether good or bad, which are rooted in ignorance, tend to prolong wandering in **Samsāra**. Nevertheless, good actions are essential to get rid of the ills of this ocean of life.

Dependent on Volitional Activities arises Re-linking Consciousness (**Viññāna**).

This links the past with the present.

Simultaneous with the arising of re-linking consciousness there come into being Mind and Matter (**Nāma** and **Rūpa**).

The Six Senses (**Salāyatana**) are the inevitable consequences of Mind and Matter.

Because of the Six Senses Contact (**Phassa**) sets in.

Contact leads to Sensations (**Vedanā**).

Dependent on Sensations arises Craving (**Taṇhā**).

Craving produces Attachment (**Upādāna**).

Attachment conditions **Kamma (Bhava)** which, in its turn, determines future Birth (**Jāti**).

Old Age and Death (**Jarā- Maraṇa**) are the inevitable consequences of birth.

If, on account of a cause, an effect comes to be, then if the cause ceases, the effect also must cease.

The complete cessation of Ignorance leads to the cessation of birth and death.

The above process of cause and effect continues *ad infinitum*. The beginning of this process cannot be determined as it is impossible to say whence this life-flux was encompassed by ignorance. But when this ignorance is turned into knowledge and the life-flux is transmuted to **Nibbāna Dhātu**, then the end of the life process or **Samsāra** comes about.

MODES OF BIRTH AND DEATH

Buddhism assesses death to the following four causes:-

- (1) The exhaustion of the force of Reproductive **Kamma** that gives rise to the birth in question (**Kammakkhaya**).

The Buddhist belief is that, as a rule, the thought, volition or desire which is extremely strong during lifetime, becomes predominant at the point of death and conditions the subsequent birth. In this last thought-moment is present a special potentiality. When the potential energy of this Reproductive **Kamma** is exhausted, the corporealised life-force, cease even before the approach of old age.

(2) The expiration of the life-term (**Āyukkhaya**).

What are commonly understood to be natural deaths due to old age may be classed under this category. There are various planes of existence according to Buddhism and to each plane is naturally assigned a definite age-limit. Irrespective of the Kammic force that has yet to run, one must, however, succumb to death when the maximum age-limit is reached.

It may also be said that if the force is extremely powerful, the Kammic energy rematerializes itself on the same plane or in some higher realm as in the case of the **Devās**.

(3) The simultaneous exhaustion of the Reproductive Kammic energy and the expiration of the life-term (**Ubhayakkhaya**).

(4) The action of a stronger **Kamma (Upacchedaka)** that suddenly cuts off the power of the Reproductive **Kamma** before the expiry of the life-term.

The first three types of deaths are collectively called **Kālamaraṇa** (timely death) and the last one is known as **Akālamaraṇa** (untimely death). An oil lamp, for instance, may get extinguished owing to any of the following four causes:- the exhaustion of the wick, the exhaustion of oil, simultaneous exhaustion of both wick and oil and some extraneous cause like a gust of wind.

The death of a person may similarly be caused by the above-mentioned four ways.

THE FOUR MODES OF BIRTH

The four Modes of Birth are:-

- (1) Egg-born creatures (**Andaja**), such as birds, snakes, etc.
- (2) Womb-born creatures (**Jalābuja**). All human beings, some earth-bound deities and those animals that take their conception in a mother's womb, belong to this class.
- (3) Moisture-born creatures (**Samsedaja**), such as certain insects that take moisture as material for their growth.
- (4) Creatures having spontaneous births (**Opapātika**). They are generally invisible to the naked eye. Conditioned by past **Kamma**, they appear suddenly, independently of parents. Brahmas, Devas of heavenly realms, Petas and miserable ones who are subject to torments and sufferings in states of woe (**Niraya**) are included in this class.

THE PLANES OF EXISTENCE

There are 31 Planes of Existence. They are:-

(A) The Four States of Unhappiness (**Duggati**), viz.,

- (1) **Niraya** - woeful states, which are temporary, but not everlasting.
- (2) **Tiracchāna Yoni** - the animal kingdom.
- (3) **Peta Yoni** - the plane of Petas or ghost-beings.
- (4) **Asura Yoni** - the plane of Asura demons.

(B) The Seven Happy States (**Sugati**), viz.,

- (1) **Manussa** - the realm of human beings.
- (2) Six **Devalokas** - heavenly realms.

(C) Sixteen **Rūpalokas** - Realms of Form.

(D) Four **Arūpalokas** - Formless Realms.

ĀR PALOKA (4) Formless Realms		ĀR PALOKA (4) Formless Realms	
N'eve Saññā N'kaññeyāna Akāsaññeyāna Vijñānaññeyāna Akāśaññeyāna		84,000 M.K. 60,000 " 40,000 " 20,000 " "	
Catuttha Jhāna Bhāmi		16,000 " 8,000 " 4,000 " 2,000 " 1,000 " "	
Fourth Jhāna Realm		Suddhavasa Pure Abodes	
Tatiya Jhāna Bhāmi Third Jhāna Realm		Akanittha Susasi Sudassa Atappa Avittha	
Dutiya Jhāna Bhāmi Second Jhāna Realm		Asaññasatta Vehapphala	
Purkama Jhāna Bhāmi First Jhāna Realm		Subhakintā Appamānābhā Parittābhā Ābhasara Appamānābhā Parittābhā	
		Mahā Brahma Brahma Purohita Brahma Pārisajja	
		16,000 C.Y. 8,000 " 4,000 " 2,000 " 1,000 " 500 " "	
SUGATI (7) Happy States		1 1/2 1/3 A.K.	
DEVALOKA (6) Celestial Realms		Paranimitāvassavīti Nimmānarati Tuṣṭa Yāma Tāvātimsa Cātummahārājika	
Manussa - Human Realm		No Limit	
DUGGATI (4) Evil States		Asurayoni Petayoni Tiracchāna Yoni Niraya	
		"	
		"	
		"	
		"	

HOW REBIRTH TAKES PLACE

To the dying man is presented a **Kamma**, **Kamma Nimitta** or **Gati Nimitta**. By **Kamma** is here meant some action of his whether good or bad. It may be either a meritorious or a demeritorious Weighty Action (**Garuka Kamma**), such as **Jhānas** (Ecstasies) or parricide and so forth.

These are so powerful that they totally eclipse all other actions and appear very vividly before the mental eye. If experience has afforded him nothing weighty, he may take the object of his dying-thought a **Kamma** done immediately before death (**Āsanna Kamma**).

In the absence of an **Āsanna Kamma**, a habitual meritorious or demeritorious act (**Āciṇṇa Kamma**) is presented, such as stealing in the case of a robber or the healing of the sick in the case of a good physician. Failing all these, some casual act, that is, one of the accumulative reserves of the endless past (**Katattā Kamma**), becomes the object of the dying-thought.

Kamma Nimitta is any sight, sound, smell, taste, touch or idea which was obtained at the time of the commission of the **Kamma**, such as knives in the case of a butcher, patients in the case of a physician, an object of worship in the case of a devotee, etc.

By **Gati Nimitta** is meant some sign of the place where one is destined to be reborn - an event which invariably happens to dying persons. When these indications of the future birth occur, if they are bad, they could be turned into good. This is done by influencing the thoughts of the dying man, so that his good thought may now act as the proximate **Kamma** and counteract the influence of the Reproductive **Kamma** which would otherwise affect his subsequent birth.

These symbols of one's destiny may be hellish fires, forests, mountainous regions, a mother's womb, celestial mansions, etc.

Taking for the object of the dying-thought one of the above, a thought process runs its course even if the death be an instantaneous one. It is said that even the fly which is crushed by a hammer on the anvil also experiences such a process of thought before it actually dies.

By death is meant the ceasing of the psycho-physical life of one's individual existence. Death takes place by the passing away of vitality (**Āyu**), heat (**Usma**) and consciousness (**Viññāna**).

In the words of a Western philosopher death is merely "the temporary end of a temporary phenomenon". It is not the complete annihilation of the so-called being, for, although the organic life has ceased, the force which hitherto actuated it is not destroyed.

Just as an electric light is only the outward visible manifestation of invisible electric energy, even so we are only the outward manifestations of invisible Kammic energy. The bulb may break and the light may be extinguished, but the current remains and the light may be reproduced in another bulb.

At death the consciousness perishes only to give birth to another consciousness in a subsequent birth. This renewed life-flux inherits all past experiences.

This new being is neither absolutely the same as the past one owing to its different composition, nor totally different - being the identical stream of Kammic energy (**Na ca so na ca añño**).

The birth-process of the butterfly may be cited in illustration of this. It was first an egg and then it became a caterpillar. Later, it

developed into a chrysalis and finally evolved into a butterfly. This process occurs in the course of one lifetime. The butterfly is neither the same as, nor totally different from, the caterpillar. Here, too, there is a flux of life or a continuity.

The transition of the flux is also instantaneous. There is no room for an intermediate state (**Antara bhava**). Buddhists do not believe that the spirit of the deceased person takes lodgment in a certain state until it finds a suitable place for its reincarnation.

Rebirth takes place immediately and there is no difference in time whether one is born in a heaven or in a state of misery, as an animal or as a human being.

WHAT IS IT THAT IS REBORN? NO-SOUL (ANATTA) - PANCAKKHANDA

According to Buddhism, apart from mind and matter which constitute this so-called being, there is no immortal soul or an eternal ego which man is either gifted with or has obtained in a mysterious way from a mysterious Being or force.

The Buddhist Doctrine of rebirth should be distinguished from the theory of reincarnation or transmigration, for Buddhism denies the existence of an unchanging or eternal soul. In the ultimate sense a Buddhist cannot think of an unchanging soul, any being in the form of a **Deva**, a man or an animal. These forms are merely the temporary manifestations of the **Kammic** force. "Being" is only a concept used for conventional purposes.

If nothing in the form of a spirit or soul passes from this life to the other, what is it that is reborn?

In asking this question one takes for granted that there is something to be reborn.

In the past it was argued - “**Cogito, ergo sum** - I think, therefore I am.” True, indeed, but it has to be proven first that there is an I to think.

I say that there is no I to think. In one breath I contradict myself. Yes, it has to be admitted that we cannot avoid using conventional terms.

We say that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, despite what scientists prove to us. We cannot strike a place twice although to all appearance we have done so. Everything has changed so soon. Even space has changed at the second moment.

According to Buddhism the so-called being is composed of mind and matter - **Nāma** and **Rūpa**.

Rūpa or matter, is merely the manifestation of forces and qualities.

In the ancient days the Indian sages, too, believed in an indivisible atom - **Paramāṇu**. The Buddha analysed this so-called indivisible **Paramāṇu** and declared that it is only a manifestation of inter-related forces which He termed **Paramatthas** or fundamental units of matter.

These **Paramatthas** are **Paṭhavi**, **Āpo**, **Tejo** and **Vāyo**. **Paṭhavi** means the element of extension, the substratum of matter. **Āpo** is the element of cohesion. **Tejo** is the element of heat. **Vāyo** is the element of motion.

The four essentials of matter are invariably combined with four derivatives - namely, colour (**Vaṇṇa**), odour (**Gandha**), taste (**Rasa**) and nutritive essence (**Ojā**).

The four elements and the derivatives are inseparable and inter-

related, but one element may preponderate over the other, for instance, the element of extension predominates in earth; cohesion in water, heat in fire and motion in air.

Mind, which is the most important part in the machinery of man, is also a compound of fleeting mental states. There are fifty-two such mental states. **Vedanā** or sensation is one, **Saññā** or perception, is another. The remaining fifty mental states are collectively called **Sankhārās** or volitional activities. These immaterial states arise in a consciousness (**Viññāna**).

Thus the so-called being is a complex compound of five Aggregates (**Pancakkhandha**) - namely, **Rūpa** or matter, **Vedanā** or sensations, **Saññā** or perceptions, **Sankhārā** or volitional activities, and **Viññāna** or consciousness, which are in state of constant flux.

One's individuality is the combination of these five Aggregates. There is no permanent soul that resides in this so-called being.

HOW IS REBIRTH POSSIBLE WITHOUT A SOUL TO BE REBORN?

Birth is simply the arising of the **Khandhās**, the aggregates. Rebirth is the arising of the aggregates, again and again.

Just as the arising of a physical state is conditioned by a preceding state as its cause, even so the coming-into-being of this psycho-physical life is conditioned by causes anterior to its birth. As one life-process is possible without a permanent thing passing from one thought-moment to another, a series of life-processes is possible without anything to transmigrate from one life to another.

This body - to use conventional terms - dies, transmitting its **Kammic** force to another without anything transmigrating from this life to the other. The future being there will be conditioned by the

present **Kamma** here. The new being is neither absolutely the same as its predecessor - since the composition is not identical - nor entirely another - being the same stream of **Kammic** energy. There is, therefore, a continuity of a particular life-flux; just that and nothing more.



1. *"Christian Heineken talked within a few hours of his birth at Lubec in 1721, could repeat passages from the Bible at 1, answer any question on geography at 2, speak French and Latin at 3 and at 4 years of age was a student of philosophy. He died before he was 5.*

"William James Sidis, wonder child of the United States, could read and write at 2, spoke French, Russian, English, German with some Latin and Greek at 8 and at 11, lectured on the fourth dimension to a gathering of professors." ("The Ceylon Observer, November 21, 1948).

**See "Many Mansions" and "The World Within" by Gina Cerminara.*

2. *"We have come to look upon the present as the child of the past and as the parent of the future." - T. H. Huxley.*
3. *"It is a strong argument for a state of retribution hereafter that in this world virtuous persons are very often unfortunate and vicious persons prosperous." - Addison.*
4. *Saṃsāra* lit., wandering again and again. It is the unbroken process of the Aggregates, Elements and Sense-organs.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS¹

Truth (**Sacca**) is that which is. It is an incontrovertible fact. According to Buddhism there are four such Truths - all associated with man.

In the **Rohitassa Sutta** the Buddha states:-

“In this very one-fathom long body, along with its perceptions and thoughts, I proclaim the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world and the Path leading to the cessation of the world.”

This interesting passage refers to the Four Noble Truths which the Buddha Himself discovered. Whether Buddhas arise or not, they exist and it is a Buddha that reveals them to the ignorant world.

These Truths are in Pali termed **Ariya Saccāni** because they were discovered by the Greatest **Ariya**, that is, one who is far removed from passions or because they lead to the Ariyan state of passionlessness.

The First Truth deals with **Dukkha**, which, for need of a better English equivalent, is inappropriately rendered by suffering.

As a feeling **Dukkha** means that which is difficult to be endured (**Du** - difficult, **Kha** - to endure). Here **Dukkha** is used in the sense of contemptible (**Du**) emptiness (**Kha**). The world rests on suffering (**Dukkhe loko patiṭṭhito**) - hence, it is contemptible. It is devoid of any reality - hence, it is empty or void.

Average men are only surface-seers. An **Āriyan** sees things as they truly are.

To one who sees, there is no real happiness in this sorrowful world which deceives mankind with illusory pleasures. What we call happiness is merely the gratification of some desire. “No sooner is the desire thing gained than it begins to be scorned.” Insatiate are all desires.

All are subject to birth (**jāti**) and consequently to decay (**jarā**), disease (**vyādhī**) and death (**Marāṇa**). No one is exempt from these four causes of suffering.

Impeded wish is also suffering. We do not wish to come in contact with persons or things we do not like nor do we wish to be separated from persons or things we like most. But, our wishes are not always fulfilled. What we least expect or what we least desire, is often thrust on us. At times, such unpleasant circumstances become so intolerable and painful that weak ignorant folk are compelled to put an end to their lives. In brief, this body itself is a cause of suffering.

Buddhism rests on this pivot of suffering. But, it does not follow that Buddhism is pessimism. It is neither totally pessimistic nor totally optimistic. On the contrary, it teaches a Truth that lies midway between them. Whilst emphasising the Truth of suffering, the Buddha suggests a means to get rid of this suffering and gain the Highest Happiness. The cause of this suffering is Craving, which is the Second Noble Truth.

The **Dhammapada** states:-

“From craving springs grief, from craving springs fear;
For him who is wholly free from craving, there is no grief,
whence fear?”

Suffering exists as long as there is craving or attachment (**Taṇhā**). There are three kinds of craving. The first is the grossest form of craving which is simple attachment to all sensual pleasures (**Kāmatāṇhā**). The second is attachment to pleasures connected with the view of Eternalism (**Bhavataṇhā**), the third is that which is connected with the view of Nihilism (**Vibhavataṇhā**).

It is this gross and subtle craving that leads to repeated births in **Samsāra** and that which makes one cling to all forms of life.

This craving is so powerful a force that one has to summon eight equally powerful forces (the Eightfold Path) to overpower this one single foe.

The grossest forms of craving are first weakened on attaining **Sakadāgāmi** and are eradicated on attaining **Anāgāmi**. The subtle forms of craving are eradicated only on attaining Arahantship.

The Third Noble Truth² is the complete Cessation of suffering which is **Nibbāna**, the Bliss Supreme. It is achieved by the total eradication of all forms of craving.

The Fourth Noble Truth³ is the Path leading to the Cessation of suffering, which is the Noble Eightfold Path, the *via media* - the golden mean - of the Buddha.

The first two are mundane (**lokiya**), the second two are supramundane (**lokuttara**).

The first three deal with the philosophy of the Buddha's Teaching and the fourth with the practice in accordance with that philosophy.

Buddhism as such is neither an ordinary philosophy nor an ordinary ethical system. It is a moral and philosophical Teaching, founded

on the bed-rock of facts that can be tested and verified by personal experience.

Strictly speaking, Buddhism cannot be called a religion either because it is not a system of faith and worship which emphasises the existence of a supernatural God. If by religion is meant a teaching (**Āgama**) which distinguishes between right and wrong and which furnishes men with a guide to proper conduct, then it is a *religion* of *religions*.



1. See the *Dhammacakka Sutta* for a brief exposition of the Four Noble Truths. Ch. IV.
2. See Chapter IV.
3. See Chapter IV.

CHAPTER XIV

NIBBĀṆA

NIBBĀṆA is the *summum bonum* of Buddhism.

DEFINITION

The Pali word **Nibbāṇa** (Sanskrit **Nirvāṇa**) is composed of “**Ni**” and “**Vāṇa**”. **Ni** is a particle implying negation. **Vāṇa** means weaving or craving. It is this craving which acts as a cord to connect one life with another.

“It is called **Nibbāṇa** in that it is a ‘departure’ (**ni**) from that craving which is called **Vāṇa**, lusting.”

As long as one is bound up by craving, one accumulates fresh Kammic forces which must materialize in one form or other in the eternal cycle of birth and death. When all forms of craving are extirpated, Kammic forces cease to operate and one attains **Nibbāṇa**, escaping the cycle of birth and death. The Buddhist conception of Deliverance is this escape from the ever recurring cycle of life and death which is not merely an escape from sin and hell.

Nibbāṇa is also explained as the extinction of the fire of lust (**Lobha**), hatred (**Dosa**) and delusion (**Moha**).

IS NIBBĀṆA NOTHINGNESS?

To say that **Nibbāṇa** is nothingness simply because one cannot perceive it with the five senses, is as illogical as to say that light

does not exist simply because the blind do not see it. In the well-known fable the fish who was acquainted only with water, arguing with the turtle, triumphantly concluded that there existed no land, because he received “no” to all his queries. The turtle, though acquainted with both sea and land, could not explain to the fish the real nature of land.¹ The fish, too, could not grasp what land was as it was acquainted only with water. In the same way, the Arahants who are acquainted with both the mundane and supramundane, cannot explain to a worldling what the supramundane exactly is by mundane terms, nor can a worldling understand the supramundane merely by mundane knowledge. It is a supramundane state which is to be realized by one’s own intuitive knowledge.

What **Nibbāṇa** is not, one can definitely say. What it precisely is, one cannot adequately express in conventional terms. It is for self-realization.

SOPĀDISESA AND ANUPĀDISESA NIBBĀṆA DHĀTU

These are not two kinds of **Nibbāṇa**, but one single **Nibbāṇa** receiving its name according to the way it is experienced before and after death.

Nibbāṇa is attainable in this present life. Buddhism does not state that its ultimate goal could be reached only in a life beyond. When **Nibbāṇa** is realized in this life with the body remaining, it is called **Sopādisesa Nibbāṇa Dhātu**.² When an Arahant attains **Parinibbāṇa**, after the dissolution of the body, without any remainder of physical existence, it is called **Anupādisesa Nibbāṇa Dhātu**.

THREE DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS OF NIBBĀṆA

Contrasting **Nibbāṇa** with **Samsāra**, the Buddha says that the

former is eternal (**Dhuva**), desirable (**Subha**) and happy (**Sukha**).

According to Buddhism everything cosmic and hyper-cosmic is classed under two divisions - namely, things conditioned by causes (**Saṅkhata**) and things not conditioned by any cause (**Asaṅkhata**).

Nibbāṇa is not conditioned by any cause. Hence, there is neither an arising nor a passing- away. It is birth-less, decay-less, deathless. It is neither a cause nor an effect. All conditioned things - and to this category belongs everything in this universe - are, on the contrary, constantly changing without remaining for two consecutive moments the same.

Everything that has sprung from a cause must inevitably pass away and as such is undesirable (**Asubha**).

That which is transient and undesirable certainly cannot be happy (**Sukha**). **Nibbāṇa**, being non-conditioned, that which has not arisen from a cause, is, in contradistinction to phenomenal existence, eternal, desirable and happy.

The happiness of **Nibbāṇa** should be differentiated from ordinary happiness. **Nibbāṇic** bliss arises as the result of calming down passions (**Vupasama**) unlike the worldly happiness which results from the gratification of some desire (**Vedayita**).

In conventional terms the Buddha says - **Nibbāṇam paramam sukham** - **Nibbāṇa** is the highest bliss. It is bliss supreme because it is not a kind of happiness that is experienced by the senses. It is a positive blissful state of relief.

The very fact of the cessation of suffering is ordinarily termed happiness, which, too, is not an appropriate word to depict its real nature.

WHERE IS NIBBĀṆA?

“Just as fire is not stored up in any particular place but arises when the necessary conditions exist, so **Nibbāṇa** is not said to be existing in a particular place, but is attained when the necessary conditions are fulfilled.”

In the **Rohitassa Sutta** the Buddha says:- “In this very one fathom-long body, along with its perceptions and thoughts, do I proclaim the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world and the path leading to the cessation of the world.”

Here, world means suffering. The cessation of the world, therefore, means the cessation of suffering, which is **Nibbāṇa**.

One's **Nibbāṇa** is dependent upon this one-fathom body. It is not something that created itself nor is it something to be created.

Nibbāṇa is not a sort of heaven where a transcendental ego resides but an attainment (**Dhamma**) which is within the reach of all.

WHAT ATTAINS NIBBĀṆA?

This question must necessarily be set aside as irrelevant, for Buddhism denies the existence of a permanent entity or an immortal soul. As right now and here there is neither a permanent ego nor an identical being, it is needless to say that there is no “I” in **Nibbāṇa**.

The **Visuddhi Magga** states:-

“Misery only doth exist, none miserable;
Nor doer is there, nought save the deed is found;
Nibbana is, but the man who seeks it;
The path exists, but not the traveller on it.”

The chief difference between the Buddhist and the Hindu conception of **Nibbāna** lies in the fact that Buddhists view their goal without an eternal soul and creator, whilst Hindus do.

This is the reason why Buddhism can neither be called Eternalism nor Nihilism. In **Nibbāna** nothing is eternalized nor is anything annihilated.

As Sir Edwin Arnold says:-

“If any teach **Nirvāna** is to cease
Say unto such they lie.
If any teach **Nirvāna** is to live
Say unto such they err.”

(The Light of Asia)



1. See Bhikkhu **Sīlācāra** - *The Four Noble Truths*.
2. **Sa** - with. **Upādi** - aggregates (mind and body), **Sesa** - remaining. The aggregates are called **Upādi** because they are firmly grasped by craving and false view.

CHAPTER XV

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

The Noble Eightfold Path (**Ariya Atṭhaṅgika Magga**), discovered by the Buddha Himself, is the only way to **Nibbāṇa**. It avoids the extreme of self-mortification that weakens one's intellect and the extreme of self-indulgence that retards one's spiritual progress. It consists of the following eight factors:-

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) | Right Understanding | (Sammā Dīṭṭhi) |
| (2) | Right Thoughts | (Sammā Saṅkappa) |
| (3) | Right Speech | (Sammā Vācā) |
| (4) | Right Action | (Sammā Kammanta) |
| (5) | Right Livelihood | (Sammā Ājīva) |
| (6) | Right Effort | (Sammā Vāyāma) |
| (7) | Right Mindfulness | (Sammā Sati) |
| (8) | Right Concentration | (Sammā Samādhi) |

1. Right Understanding is the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. In other words, it is the understanding of oneself as one really is. The keynote of Buddhism is this Right Understanding. Buddhism, as such, is based on knowledge and not on unreasonable belief.

2. Right Thoughts are threefold. They are the Thoughts of Renunciation (**Nekkhamma Saṅkappa**) which are opposed to lustful desires. Benevolent Thoughts (**Avyāpāda Saṅkappa**) which are opposed to ill-will and Thoughts of Harmlessness (**Avihimsā Saṅkappa**) which are opposed to cruelty. These tend to purify the mind.

3. Right Speech deals with refraining from falsehood, slandering, harsh words and frivolous talks.

4. Right Action deals with refraining from killing, stealing and unchastity.

5. Right Livelihood deals with the five kinds of trades which should be avoided by a lay disciple. They are trading in arms, human beings, flesh (that is, breeding animals for slaughter), intoxicating drinks and poison. Hypocritical conduct is cited as wrong livelihood for monks.

6. Right Effort is fourfold - namely, (i) the endeavour to discard evil that has already arisen, (ii) the endeavour to prevent the arising of unrisen evil, (iii) the endeavour to develop unrisen good and (iv) the endeavour to promote that good which has already arisen.

7. Right Mindfulness is also fourfold. It is the mindfulness with regard to body, sensations, mind and Dhamma (Phenomena).

8. Right Concentration is the one-pointedness of the mind.

The first two are grouped in Wisdom (**Paññā**), the second three in Morality (**Sīla**) and the last three in Concentration (**Samādhi**).

Sīla	{ Right Speech Right Action Right Livelihood
Samādhi	{ Right Effort Right Mindfulness Right Concentration
Paññā	{ Right Understanding Right Thoughts

Strictly speaking, these factors that comprise the Noble Eightfold Path signify eight mental properties (**Cetasikas**) collectively found in the four classes of Supramundane Consciousness whose object is **Nibbāna**.

According to the order of development **Sīla**, **Samādhi** and **Paññā** are the three stages of the Path.

All these stages are embodied in the following beautiful verse:-

**Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ - kusalassa upasampadā
Sacittapariyodapanāṃ - etaṃ Buddhāna sāsanaṃ.**

To cease from all evil - To do what is good,
To cleanse one's mind - This is the advice of all the Buddhas.

Sīla or Morality is the first stage.

Without killing or causing injury to any living being, the aspirant should be kind and compassionate towards all. Refraining from stealing, he should be upright and honest in all his dealings. Abstaining from sexual misconduct, he should be pure and chaste.

Shunning false speech, he should be truthful. Avoiding pernicious drinks that promote heedlessness, he should be sober and diligent.

Every follower of the Buddha is expected to observe these five principles of regulated behaviour daily. As circumstances permit he may advance a step further and observe the eight¹ or even the ten precepts.²

Whilst he progresses slowly and steadily with regulated word and deed and sense-restraint, the Kammic force of this striving aspirant compels him to renounce worldly pleasures and adopt the ascetic life. Realizing the vanity of worldly pleasures, he voluntarily forsakes his earthly possessions and donning the ascetic garb, tries to lead the Holy Life in all its purity. It should be understood that it is not absolutely necessary to retire apart and lead the life of an ascetic to be a Saint. The life of a Bhikkhu expedites and facilitates spiritual progress, but even as a layman one could attain Sainthood. There are several instances of laymen who realized **Nibbāṇa** without renouncing the world. **Anāthapiṇḍika** and **Visākha** were **Sotāpannas**, the **Sākya Mahānāma** was a **Sakadāgāmi**, the potter **Ghatikāra** was an **Anāgāmi** and King **Suddhodana** died as an Arahant.

In the role of a Bhikkhu the aspirant leads a life of voluntary poverty and practises the four kinds of Higher **Sīla** - Discipline as prescribed by the **Pātimokkha**, Sense-Restraining, Purity of Conduct connected with livelihood and Conduct in connection with the necessities of life.

Securing a firm footing on the ground of **Sīla**, he then embarks upon the higher practice of **Samādhi**, the control and culture of the mind, the second stage of this path. **Samādhi** is the one-pointedness of the mind.

When he gains this perfect one-pointedness of the mind, it is possible to develop the five Supernormal Powers (**Abhiññā**) - namely, Divine Eye (**Dibbacakkhu**), Divine Ear (**Dibbasota**), Reminiscence of past births (**Pubbenivāsānussasti Ñāna**), Thought Reading (**Paracittavijānana**) and different psychic powers (**Iddhividha**). It must not be understood that these Supernormal powers are essential for Sainthood.

Though the mind is purified, there still lies dormant in him the tendency to give vent to his passions, for by concentration passions are only lulled to sleep. They may rise to the surface at unexpected moments.

Both Discipline and Concentration are essential, but it is Insight (**Vipassanā Paññā**) that enables one to see things as they truly are. This is the final stage on the path to **Nibbāna**.

With his one-pointed mind he looks at the world to get a correct view of life. He now meditates on the Three Characteristics (**Tilakkhaṇa**) - **Anicca** (Transiency), **Dukkha** (Sorrow) and **Anatta** (Soul-lessness). He comprehends that all conditioned things are transient (**Sabbe Saṅkhārā Aniccā**), all conditioned things are sorrowful (**Sabbe Saṅkhārā Dukkhā**) and all things conditioned and non-conditioned are soulless (**Sabbe Dhammā Anattā**). Of these three characteristics he takes the one that appeals to him most and intently keeps on developing insight in that particular direction until that glorious day comes to him when he would realize **Nibbāna** for the first time in his life, having destroyed the first three Fetters (**Samyojana**) - Self-illusion (**Sakkāya Diṭṭhi**), Doubts (**Vicikicchā**) and Indulgence to wrongful rites and ceremonies (**Silabbattaparāmāsa**).

At this stage he is called a **Sotāpanna** - one who has entered the Stream that leads to **Nibbāna**. As he has not eradicated all Fetters he is reborn seven times at the most.

Summoning up fresh courage as a result of this distant glimpse of **Nibbāṇa**, he cultivates deeper Insight and becomes a **Sakadāgāmi** - Once-Returner - by weakening two more Fetters - namely, Sense-desires (**Kāmarāga**) and Ill-will (**Paṭigha**). He is called a **Sakadāgāmi** because he is reborn on earth only once in case he does not attain Arahantship.

It is in the third stage of Sainthood - **Anāgāmi** (Never-Returner) that he completely discards the above two Fetters. Thereafter he neither returns to this world nor does he seek birth in the celestial realms, since he has no more desire for sensual pleasures. After death he is reborn in the "Pure Abodes" (**Suddhāvāsa**), a congenial place meant exclusively for **Anāgāmins** and Arahants.

Now the earnest pilgrim, encouraged by the unprecedented success of his endeavours, makes his final advance and destroying the remaining five Fetters -

1. Attachment to Realms of Forms (**Rūparāga**),
2. Attachment to formless Realms (**Arūparāga**),
3. Conceit (**Māna**),
4. Restlessness (**Uddhacca**)
5. Ignorance (**Avijjā**)

-becomes a Perfect Saint by attaining Arahantship.

Thereafter he lives as long as his Reproductive Kammic force lasts. On the dissolution of the body he attains **Parinibbāṇa**.



1. *The Eight Precepts are:- Abstaining from: 1. killing, 2. stealing, 3. ignoble conduct (i.e., practising celibacy), 4. lying, 5. intoxicants, 6. taking food after mid-day, 7. dancing, singing, music, unseemly shows, garlands, scents, unguents, 8. high and luxurious seats.*
2. *The Ten Precepts are - The first six are the same as above. 7. abstaining from dancing, singing, music and unseemly shows, 8. abstaining from garlands, scents and unguents, 9. abstaining from high and luxurious seats, 10. abstaining from gold and silver (i.e., handling money).*

CHAPTER XVI

NĪVARAṆA OR HINDRANCES

Nīvaraṇa (*Nī* and *var*, to hinder, to obstruct) is that which hinders one's progress or that which obstructs the path to Emancipation and the heavenly states. It is also explained as that which "muffles, enwraps or trammels thought".

There are five kinds of **Nīvaraṇas** or Hindrances. They are:- (i) Sensual Desire (**Kāmacchanda**), (ii) Ill-will (**Vyāpāda**), (iii) Sloth and Torpor (**Thīna-Middha**), (iv) Restlessness and Worry (**Uddhacca-Kukkucca**), (v) Doubts (**Vicikicchā**).

1. **Kāmacchanda** means sensual desire or attachment to pleasurable sense-objects such as form, sound, odour, taste and contact. This is regarded as one of the Fetters that bind one to **Samsāra**.

An average person is bound to get tempted by these alluring objects of sense. Lack of self-control results in the inevitable arising of passions. This Hindrance is inhibited by One-pointedness (**Ekaggatā**), which is one of the five characteristics of **Jhāna**. It is attenuated on attaining **Sakadāgāmi** and completely eradicated on attaining **Anāgāmi**. Subtle forms of attachment such as **Rūpa Rāga** and **Arūpa Rāga** (Attachment to Realms of Form and Formless Realms) are eradicated only on attaining Arahantship.

The six following conditions tend to the eradication of sense-desires:-

- (i) perceiving the loathsomeness of the object, (ii) constant

meditation on loathsomeness, (iii) sense-restraint, (iv) moderation in food, (v) good friendship and (vi) profitable talk.

2. **Vyāpāda** is ill-will or aversion. A desirable object leads to attachment, whilst an undesirable one leads to aversion. These are the two great fires that burn the whole world. Aided by ignorance, these two produce all the suffering in the world.

Ill-will is inhibited by **Pīti** or joy which is one of the **Jhāna** factors. It is attenuated on attaining **Sakadāgāmi** and eradicated on attaining **Anāgāmi**.

The six following conditions tend to the eradication of ill-will:-

- (i) perceiving the object with thoughts of goodwill,
- (ii) constant meditation on loving-kindness (**Mettā**),
- (iii) thinking that **Kamma** is one's own, (iv) adherence to that view, (v) good friendship and (vi) profitable talk.

3. **Thīna** or Sloth is explained as a morbid state of the mind and **Middha** as a morbid state of the mental properties. A stolid mind is as "inert as a bat hanging to a tree or as molasses cleaving to a stick or as a lump of butter too stiff for spreading". Sloth and torpor should not be understood as bodily drowsiness, because Arahants, who have destroyed these two states, also experience bodily fatigue. These two promote mental inertness and are opposed to strenuous effort (**Viriya**). They are inhibited by the **Jhāna** factor, **vitakka** or initial application and are eradicated on attaining Arahantship.

The six following conditions tend to the eradication of Sloth and Torpor:-

- (i) reflection on the "object of moderation in food",

(ii) changing of bodily postures, (iii) contemplation on the object of light (**ālokasaññā**), (iv) living in the open air, (v) good friendship and (vi) profitable talk.

4. **Uddhacca** is mental restlessness or excitement of the mind. It is a mental state associated with all types of immoral consciousness. As a rule an evil is done with some excitement or restlessness.

Kukkucca is worry. It is either repentance over the committed evil or over the unfulfilled good. Repentance over one's evil does not exempt one from its inevitable consequences. The best repentance is the will not to repeat that evil.

Both these hindrances are inhibited by the **Jhāna** factor, **Sukka** or happiness. Restlessness is eradicated on attaining Arahantship and worry is eradicated on attaining **Anāgāmi**.

The six following conditions tend to the eradication of these two states:-

(i) erudition or learning, (ii) questioning or discussion, (iii) understanding the nature of the Vinaya discipline, (iv) association with senior monks, (v) good friendship and (vi) profitable talk.

5. **Vicikicchā** is doubt or perplexity. That which is devoid of the remedy of wisdom is **vicikicchā** (**vi** = devoid; **cikicchā** = wisdom). It is also explained as vexation due to perplexed thinking (**Vici** = seeking; **kicchā** = vexation).

Here, **Vicikicchā** is not used in the sense of doubt with regard to the Buddha, etc., for even non-Buddhists inhibit it and gain **Jhānas**. As a Fetter **vicikicchā** is certainly that doubt about the Buddha, etc., but as a Hindrance it denotes indecision or unsteadiness in

one particular thing that is being done. The Commentary explains **vicikicchā** as the inability to decide anything definitely that it is so.

This state is inhibited by the **Jhāna** factor - **vicāra**, sustained application - and is eradicated on attaining **Sotāpatti**.

The six following conditions tend to its eradication:-

(i) knowledge of the Dhamma and Vinaya, (ii) discussion or questioning, (iii) understanding of the nature of the Vinaya Discipline, (iv) excessive confidence, (v) good friendship and (vi) profitable talk.



CHAPTER XVII

THE THREE COUNCILS

THE FIRST COUNCIL

The Buddha passed away in His 80th year on the full-moon day of Vesak. His death was an irreparable loss. All His followers, with the exception of **Anāgāmins** and Arahants, were plunged in deep grief and were weeping and lamenting. But an immoral Bhikkhu named **Subhadda**, who had entered the Order in his old age, was the only one that rejoiced over His death.

“Grieve not, brothers,” said he. “Weep not. We are now delivered of that Great Ascetic. He constantly worried us, saying:- ‘This is suitable, this is not suitable.’ Now we are free to do what we like.”

These unexpected words that fell from the lips of a disciple, when hardly a week has passed since the death of the Teacher, induced the Venerable **Kassapa**, the third chief disciple of the Buddha, to hold a Council of leading Arahants in order to protect and fortify the **Sāsana**. The other **Therās** were consulted and they all welcomed the suggestion.

King **Ajātasattu** was informed of the intention of the Sangha and he made all the necessary arrangements for the Sangha to assemble at the entrance to the **Sattapanni** Cave in **Rājagaha**.

500 seats were prepared in the spacious hall, but only 499 distinguished Arahants were chosen for the Convocation. The vacant seat was meant for the Venerable **Ānanda** who was then a

Sotāpanna. But in due time, as anticipated, he attained Arahantship and appeared on the scene by his psychic powers to occupy the vacant seat.

The Venerable **Kassapa** was the presiding **Thera**. The Venerable **Upāli** and **Ānanda** were chosen to rehearse the Vinaya and Dhamma respectively.

The first council was held three months after the **Parinibbāna** of the Buddha, in the eighth year of King **Ajātasattu**'s reign. It lasted seven months.

Tipitaka

The Vinaya being the life-blood of the **Sāsana** was rehearsed first. It is composed of five books - namely,

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) Pārājika Pāli | (Major Offences) | } Vibhanga |
| (2) Pācittiya Pāli | (Minor Offences) | |
| (3) Mahāvagga Pāli | (Greater Section) | } Khandhaka |
| (4) Cūlavagga Pāli | (Smaller Section) | |
| (5) Parivāra Pāli | (Epitome of the Vinaya) | |

The Dhamma consists of Five **Nikāyas** - namely,

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| (1) Dīgha Nikāya | (Collection of Long Discourses) |
| (2) Majjhima Nikāya | (Collection of Middle-length Discourses) |

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| (3) Samyutta Nikāya | (Collection of Kindred Sayings) |
| (4) Anguttara Nikāya | (Collection of Discourses arranged in accordance with number) |
| (5) Khuddaka Nikāya | (Smaller Collection) |

The fifth is subdivided into fifteen books:-

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (1) Khuddaka Pāṭha | (Shorter Texts) |
| (2) Dhammapada | (Way of Truth) |
| (3) Udāna | (Paeans of Joy) |
| (4) Iti Vuttaka | ("Thus said" Discourses) |
| (5) Sutta Nipāta | (Collected Discourses) |
| (6) Vimāna Vatthu | (Stories of Celestial Mansions) |
| (7) Peta Vatthu | (Stories of Petas) |
| (8) Theragāthā | (Psalms of the Brethren) |
| (9) Therīgāthā | (Psalms of the Sisters) |
| (10) Jātaka | (Birth Stories) |
| (11) Niddesa | (Expositions) |
| (12) Paṭisambhidā | (Analytical Knowledge) |
| (13) Apadāna | (Lives of Arahants) |
| (14) Buddhavaṃsa | (The History of the Buddha) |
| (15) Cariyā Piṭaka | (Modes of Conduct) |

It should be noted that the introductory words in every **Sutta** - "**Evam me sutam**", "Thus have I heard" - were uttered by the Venerable **Ānanda Thera**.

The **Abhidhamma**, according to tradition, was rehearsed by all the Arahants that were present at the Convocation. It consists of the following seven books:-

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) Dhamma Sangani | (Classification of Dhammas) |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| (2) Vibhanga | (The Book of Divisions) |
| (3) Kathāvatthu | (Points of Controversy) ¹ |
| (4) Puggala Paññatti | (Description of Individuals) |
| (5) Dhātukathā | (Discussion with reference to Elements) |
| (6) Yamaka | (The Book of the Pairs) |
| (7) Paṭṭhāna | (The Book of Relations) |

All these 31 books are collectively termed the **Tipiṭaka** (Three Baskets). The first **Vinaya Piṭaka** (Basket of Discipline) mainly deals with rules and regulations which the Buddha promulgated, as occasion arose for the future discipline of the Order; of Monks (Bhikkhus) and Nuns (Bhikkhunis). The **Sutta Piṭaka** (Basket of Discourses) consists chiefly of Discourses delivered by the Buddha on various occasions. Some Discourses delivered by the Venerable **Sāriputta**, **Moggallāna**, **Ānanda**, etc., are also included in it. The **Abhidhamma Piṭaka** (Basket of Ultimate Doctrine) contains the profound philosophy of the Buddha's Teaching.

The **Tipiṭaka** was first committed to writing at **Aluviḥāra** in Ceylon about 80 B.C. in the reign of King **Vaṭṭhagāmani Abhaya**.

THE SECOND COUNCIL

The Second Council was held at **Vesāli** in the tenth year of King **Kālāsoka**'s reign, 100 years after the **Parinibbāna** of the Buddha.

TEN UNLAWFUL POINTS

At that time in **Vesāli** many shameless Bhikkhus of the **Vajji** clan claimed that the following ten points² were not unlawful:-

- (1) **Singilonakappa**, it is fit to use salt in horns, etc. in order to season unsalted foods.

(2) **Dvaṅgulakappa**, it is fit to eat food as long as the sun's shadow has not passed the meridian by more than two fingers' breadth.

(3) **Gāmantarakappa**, it is fit for a Bhikkhu who has already finished his meal to eat another meal without going through the due Vinaya rite if he intends to enter a village.

(4) **Āvāsakappa**, it is fit to perform the **Uposatha** ceremony in separate buildings in the case of a large **Simā** (Jurisdiction).

(5) **Anumatikappa**, it is fit to perform any Vinaya ceremony first and then take the consent of the absent Bhikkhus.

(6) **Āciṇṇakappa**, it is fit to conform to the practice of teachers and preceptors.

(7) **Amathitakappa**, it is fit for a Bhikkhu who has finished his meal to drink that milk which has changed its original state but has not yet become curd, without getting the due Vinaya rite done.

(8) **Jalogikappa**, it is fit to drink unfermented palm-wine.

(9) **Adasaka-nisidanakappa**, it is fit to use mats without fringes.

(10) **Jātarūpādikappa**, it is fit to accept gold and silver.

The Venerable **Yasa**, who came to hear of these heretical teachings, resolved even at the cost of his life to nip them in the bud. He succeeded. The Venerable **Revata** who was questioned about them pronounced that they were all unlawful.

Ultimately, in the presence of eight distinguished Arahants who had assembled at **Vālukārāma** in **Vesāli**, the Venerable **Sabbakāmi**, the most senior Arahant, being 120 years from his **Upasampadā**, questioned by the Venerable **Revata**, adjudged that they were all unlawful according to the Vinaya.

After which the Venerable **Revata** chose 700 distinguished Arahants to hold a Council in order to protect the Dhamma. This

second council lasted eight months. King **Kālāsoka** acted as the Royal Patron. The Venerable **Sabbakāmi** was the presiding **Thera**.

Amongst the assembled Arahants **Sabbakāmi**, **Sālha**, **Revata**, **Khujjasobhita**, **Yasa**, **Sambhūta** and **Sānavāsika**, all pupils of the Venerable **Ānanda** and **Vāsabhagāmika** and **Sumana**, pupils of the Venerable **Anuruddha** had the good fortune to live in the Buddha's own time.

THE THIRD COUNCIL

The conversion of King **Dharmāsoka** was a very great asset to Buddhism. With his royal patronage Buddhism flourished and the **Sāsana** gradually grew up in importance and numbers. Tempted by worldly gain, many undesirables of alien sects joined the Order and polluted the **Sāsana** by their corrupt lives and heretical views.

The Venerable **Moggaliputta Tissa**, who was then the senior Arahant, being aware of the pollution of the Order, refrained from performing the **Uposatha** Ceremony with the Sangha for seven years and was living in retirement on the banks of **Ahoganga**.

It was at this time King **Dharmāsoka** entertained a doubt about thoughtless act done by an irresponsible minister. He was told that Arahant **Moggaliputta Tissa** would be able to clear his doubts.

The King sent word to the Arahant, but he would not come. Failing twice, the third time he sent a messenger inviting him to come to protect the **Sāsana**. The Venerable **Thera** accepted the invitation and arrived at **Pātaliputra**. The King received him with due honour and accommodated him in **Asokārāma**, built by the King himself. For seven days the King stayed with him and studied the Dhamma sitting at his feet.

The Bhikkhus were then tested with regard to their views and the undesirables were eliminated from the Noble Order.

The pure Bhikkhus that remained performed the **Uposatha** for the first time after seven years.

The Arahant **Moggaliputta Tissa** availed himself of this opportunity to hold the third Council in order to protect the Dhamma and the **Sāsana**.

1,000 Arahants participated in the Council which was held at **Asokārama**, in **Pāṭaliputra (Patna)** in the 18th year of King **Asoka**'s reign, about 236 years after the **Parinibbāṇa** of the Buddha. The Venerable **Moggaliputta Tissa** was the presiding **Thera** and it was he who was responsible for the composition of **Kathāvatthu-Pakarana**, one of the seven books of the **Abhidhamma**, at this August Assembly.



1. *This book was actually compiled by the Venerable **Moggaliputta Tissa** at the Third Council.*
2. *All these points pertain to Vinaya discipline. Some of them may not be intelligible to a lay reader.*

CHAPTER XVIII

ASOKA AND HIS MISSIONS

There reigned in the newly founded city of **Patna (Pāṭaliputra)**, a **Mauryan** king named **Candragupta**. King **Bindusāra** was his son and he had sixteen wives who bore him 101 sons. Of them **Asoka** was the most distinguished. His mother was **Subhadrāṅgi**, also known as “**Dharmā**”. **Sumana** or **Susīma** was his eldest stepbrother. **Tissa**, also called **Vitasoka** or **Vigatasoka**, was his younger uterine brother.

ASOKA’S FAMILY

Asoka had five wives.

Whilst he was acting as vice-regent in **Avanti**, he married a **Sākyan** princess named **Devi**. **Kāruvāki**, **Asandhimitrā** (Chief Queen), **Padmāvati** and **Tisyarashitā** were his other wives.

He had four sons and two daughters, **Mahinda** and **Sanghamittā** were the children of **Devi**. **Tivasa** was the son of **Kāruvāki** and **Kunāla** was the son of **Padmāvati**. He had another son named **Jalauka** and a daughter named **Cārumatī**. **Aggimukha**, the husband of **Sanghamittā** and **Devapāla Kshatriya** of **Lalitapura** in **Nepal**, the husband of **Cārumatī**, were his sons-in-law. Prince **Dasaratha**, who succeeded him, **Sampati**, son of **Kunāla** and **Sumana**, son of **Sanghamittā**, were his grandsons.

ASOKA BECOMES KING

In the opinion of some scholars **Asoka** was born in 304 B.C.

According to **Pāli** Chronicles he was anointed King 218 years after **Parinibbāna** of the Buddha, but his accession took place four years later. He reigned 37 years after his coronation. He probably ascended the throne in his 30th year and died in his 71st year.

The **Pāli** Chronicles state that **Asoka**, in his ambition for supreme sovereignty, killed all his brothers except his uterine brother **Tissa**, who later entered the Order and attained Arahantship. Some scholars do not accept this tradition as some Edicts prove that some of his brothers were still alive after his coronation.

Owing to his murderous attacks on his brothers and the indescribable suffering caused to many a family by his unjust wars, he was stigmatized **Caṇḍāsoka**, **Asoka** the Wicked. But, after his conversion to Buddhism, he became such an exemplary monarch that his name was changed into **Dharmāsoka**, **Asoka** the Righteous. **Devānampiya** - Dear to the Gods, **Piyadasi** - Pleasant to Behold, were some of his well-merited epithets.

HIS CONVERSION TO BUDDHISM

In accordance with the custom of the royal household, King **Asoka** regularly bestowed alms on the Brahmin priests. But he was not pleased with their demeanour. One day, whilst he was quite casually looking through the window, he saw a dignified-looking young novice, about 12 years of age, quietly walking along the street with restrained senses. He was invited to the palace and was requested to occupy a suitable seat. Seeing no spiritual superior to him, he ascended the throne. The King thought "Assuredly he will be the head of this place." He then entertained him with due honour and taking a low seat, listened to his exposition of the Dhamma. The young novice **Nigrodha** delivered an instructive Discourse on the following stanza of the **Dhammapada**:-

“Heedfulness is the path to Deathlessness. Heedlessness is the path to death. The heedful do not die, the heedless are like unto the dead.”

The Word of the Buddha appealed to him and he became a Buddhist. His conversion was the turning-point of his career. Gradually he reformed himself. His outlook on life was completely changed. He modified his ways and means. He preferred the **Dharma Vijaya** - righteous domination - to **Dig Vijaya** - world domination. Later in life he became such a devout and righteous monarch that H. G. Wells says: -

“Amidst the tens of thousand names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines and shines almost alone a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory today than has ever heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne.”

Although he embraced Buddhism after meeting the novice **Nigrodha**, he did not give up his ambition of expanding his empire. It was after the **Kālinga** war that he became a genuine Buddhist by abandoning all warfare. Wells says he is the only monarch on record who abandoned warfare after victory.

He thereafter became an ideal Buddhist monarch. With ceaseless energy he worked for the dissemination of the Dhamma, not only in India and other parts of Asia, but also in Europe and Africa. He transformed Buddhism into a world religion. He made the important Teachings of the Buddha popular by his numerous interesting rock edicts (see Maps). He erected so many **Vihāras** (monasteries)

round about **Patna (Pāṭaliputra)** that the whole province came to be known as **Vihāra**, now **Bihār**. He made pilgrimages to almost all the sacred places connected with the life of the Buddha and lasting monuments were erected to mark those historic spots. Even the slaughtering of animals in the palace for household consumption was gradually lessened and stopped and he forbade animal sacrifice. As Pandit Nehru says:-

“Asoka’s example and the spread of Buddhism resulted in vegetarianism becoming popular.”

With his royal patronage Buddhism flourished in his time, but as a real Buddhist monarch he was tolerant towards all faiths. One edict says:-

“All sects deserve reverence for some reason or other. By thus acting a man exalts his own sect and at the same time does service to the sects of other people.”

Asoka was interested not only in the spiritual development of the people, but also in their material development. All his subjects he treated as sons. He was so willing and ready to promote the public good that he says: -

“At all times and at all places, whether I am dining or in the ladies’ apartments, in my bedroom or in my closet, in my carriage or in my palace garden, the official reporters should keep me constantly informed of the people’s business. Work I must for the common weal.”

True to his words he acted like a father to all. In his time public gardens, medicinal herbs, hospitals for both men and animals, wells, roads and educational institutions grew up all over the country. To his eternal credit it should be said that it was **Asoka** who, for the

first time in the history of the world, established hospitals for both men and animals, not only in Asia but also in Europe and Africa.

To those hasty critics who decry Buddhism as the cause of the decline and downfall of India, **Asoka's** prosperous Buddhist reign is a cogent reply.

ASOKA'S MISSIONERS

According to the **Pāli** Chronicles, at the end of the third Council which was held in the 17th year of **Asoka's** coronation, under the presidency of Arahant **Moggaliputta Tissa**, it was decided to send competent Arahants to nine different places to propagate the Teachings of the Buddha.

The names of the missioners and the places are as follows:-

MISSIONER	PLACE
1. Majjhantika Thera . . .	Kashmir & Gandhar
2. Mahādeva Thera . . .	Mahimsaka Maṇḍala
3. Rakkhita Thera . . .	Vanavāsi
4. Yonaka Dhammarak- khita Thera . . .	Aparantaka
5. Mahādhammarakkhita Thera . . .	Mahārattṭha
6. Mahārakkhita Thera . . .	Yonakaloka
7. Majjhima Thera . . .	Himavantapadesa
8. Sonaka and Uttara Theras . . .	Suvaṇṇabhūmi
9. Mahinda, Itṭhiya, Uttiya, Sambala and Bhaddasāla Theras . . .	Tambapaṇṇidipa

It is stated that each mission consisted of five **Theras** so that it would be possible to perform the **Upasampadā** ceremony in remote districts.

1. Kashmir is situated in the north-west of India. Peshavar and Ravalpindi in north Punjab embrace **Gandhāra**.

Majjhantika Thera arrived here and subjugated the **Nāga** king **Aravāla** by his psychic powers and preached the **Āsivisopama Sutta**.

2. **Mahimsaka Mandala** is identified with modern Mysore in South India. According to some it is a country south of the Vindhya Mountains. The **Devaduta Sutta** was preached here.

3. **Vanavāsi** is North **Kanara** situated in South India. Even today there is a city called **Vanavāsi** in this country.

The **Anamatagga Sutta** was the subject of the sermon.

4. **Aparanta** (Western End) is supposed to be Western India. According to the Puranas one of the five countries that existed in ancient India was **Aparanta**. Its capital was port **Suppāraka**, modern Sopara. North Gujerat, Katiyavar, Kach, Sindh are included in **Aparanta**.

The discourse that was delivered here was the **Aggikkhandhopama Sutta**.

5. **Mahāratt̥ha** is modern **Mahārashtra**, which embraces mid-West India.

The **Mahā Nārada-Kassapa Jātaka** was delivered here.

6. **Yonakarattha** is the kingdom of the Greeks. It must be the Greek kingdom that existed in West India. According to some it comprises Egypt, Syria and Greece.

The **Kālakārāma Sutta** was delivered here.

7. It is stated that the Arahants **Kassapagotta**, **Alakadeva**, **Mahādeva** and **Dundubhissara** accompanied the Arahant **Majjima** to the Himalaya region² and preached the **Dhammacakkavattana Sutta**.

8. Some identify **Suvaṇṇabhūmi** with Burma. Some say it is Karna Suvarna situated in Bengal and some Hiranyavaha district along the banks of the **Sona** river.

The **Brahmajāla Sutta** was the subject of the discourse.

9. **Tambapaṇṇidīpa** is Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

THE MISSION TO CEYLON

King **Asoka**'s son himself accompanied by four Bhikkhus, one **Sāmanera** and a lay **Upasaka**, arrived in Lanka to convert the Sinhala. It was on a festival day that they reached Ceylon. They met the reigning King **Devānampiyatissa** who had gone with a party to hunt deer on a hill called **Missaka** (modern **Mihintale**). The Arahant **Mahinda** arrested the attention of the king by addressing him simply as "**Tissa**". An interesting conversation then followed. After this the Arahant **Mahinda** preached the **Cūllahatthi-padopama Sutta** to the king and his followers, hearing which they all sought refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha and embraced this new Teaching.

The Venerable **Mahinda**'s Ceylon mission was great success. He

found in Lanka a fertile soil to disseminate the sublime Teachings of the Buddha. With royal patronage Buddhism was firmly established in Ceylon.

As Princess **Anulā**, who attained the first stage of sainthood on hearing the first Discourse delivered in the capital of **Anurādhapura**, expressed her desire to join the Order, the Venerable **Mahinda** despatched a messenger to India inviting his sister **Sanghamittā** Theri to visit Lanka in order to establish the Bhikkhuni **Sāsana**. As invited, she arrived in Ceylon with a branch of the **Mahā Bodhi** Tree at **Buddha Gayā** and accompanied by a large retinue of distinguished men who contributed largely to the material, intellectual and spiritual development of Sri Lanka.

To the eternal credit of Sinhala Buddhists it should be said that it is they who protected the sublime Teachings of the Dhamma in their pristine purity by committing them to writing on ola leaves for the first time in the history of the Buddhist world.



1. If 543 B.C. is reckoned as the date of the Parinibbana of the Buddha, then his coronation must have been in 325 B.C. According to some it is either 270 or 269 B.C.

2.. Possibly Nepal was included in the Himalaya region.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MAṄGALA SUTTA¹ (BLESSINGS)

Thus have I heard:-

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at the monastery of **Anāthapiṇḍika**,² in **Jeta's** Grove, near **Sāvattthi**.³ Now when the night was far spent, a certain deity, whose surpassing splendour illuminated the entire **Jeta** Grove, came to the presence of the Blessed One and drawing near, respectfully saluted Him and stood on one side. Standing thus, he addressed the Blessed One in verse⁴ :-

1. "Many deities and men, yearning after good, have pondered on Blessings. Pray, tell me the Highest Blessing."⁵

The Blessed One answered him thus:-

2. "Not to associate with fools, to associate with the wise and to honour those who are worthy of honour - this is the Highest Blessing.
3. "To reside in a suitable locality,⁶ to have done meritorious actions in the past and to set oneself in the right course⁷ - this is the Highest Blessing.
4. "Much learning,⁸ perfect handicraft,⁹ a highly trained discipline¹⁰ and pleasant speech - this is the Highest Blessing.
5. "The support of father and mother, the cherishing of wife and children and peaceful occupations - this is the Highest Blessing.

6. "Liberality, righteous conduct, the helping of relatives and blameless actions - this is the Highest Blessing.
7. "To cease and abstain from evil, forbearance with respect to intoxicants¹¹ and steadfastness in virtue - this is the Highest Blessing.
8. "Reverence,¹² humility, contentment, gratitude and opportune hearing of the Dhamma¹³ - this is the Highest Blessing.
9. "Patience, obedience, sight of the **Samanas**¹⁴ and religious discussions in due season - this is the Highest Blessing.
10. "Self-control, the holy life, perception of the Noble Truths and the realisation of **Nibbāna** - this is the Highest Blessing.
11. "He whose mind does not flutter by contact with worldly contingencies.¹⁵ Sorrowless, stainless and secure¹⁶ - this is the Highest Blessing.



1. Cp. *Mahāmaṅgala Jāṭaka* (No. 453). This *Sutta* appears in the *Sutta Nipāṭa* and *Khuddaka Nikāya*.

2. Lit. "He who gives alms to the helpless" or "Feeder of the forlorn". His former name was *Sudatta*. After his conversion to Buddhism, he bought the pleasant grove belonging to Prince *Jeta* and erected a monastery which was subsequently named *Jetavanārāma*. It was in this monastery that the Buddha spent the greater part of His life.

3. See Map. Identified with modern Sahet-Mahet on the banks of the Rapti.

4. The Commentary states that one day an interesting discussion arose in the "Public Hall" as to what constituted a Blessing (*Maṅgala*). People

naturally held diverse views. One declared that auspicious sights in the early morning (such as a woman with child, little boys, white bulls, etc.) should be considered a **Mangala**; another, auspicious sounds, such as "full", "luck", etc. and yet another, favourable experiences, such as the odour of fragrant flowers, the touching of the earth, etc. Men were so divided in their opinions that it resulted in the formation of three groups; and this partisanship ultimately extended, so the story goes, even as far as the **Deva** world. The **Devās**, who would not rest satisfied until the controversial point was finally settled, appealed to the superior wisdom of their acknowledged leader, **Sakka**, who, discreet as he was ordered a certain **Deva** to approach the Buddha and obtain His trustworthy opinion. It was this particular **Deva** that drew near the presence of the Blessed One and addressed Him in verse.

5. According to the Commentary "**Mangala**" means that which is conducive to happiness and prosperity. Etymologists derive the term from three syllables **Mam** (woeful state), **ga** (going) and **la** (cut) and is explained as "that which obstructs the way to states of misery."
6. i.e., any place where Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis **Upāsakas** and **Upāsikās** continually reside, where pious folks are bent on performance of the ten meritorious deeds and where the Dhamma exists as a living principle. - Comm.
7. i.e., setting one's immorality in morality, faithlessness in faith and selfishness in generosity. - Comm.
8. **Bahussuta** literally means "much hearing". This term conveys the same idea as connoted by the word "erudition" in English. In the ancient days one's education was judged by what one had memorized from oral teaching. Here "much learning" refers to knowledge of the Dhamma.
9. The Commentary mentions that handicrafts of two kinds, namely, the harmless crafts of householders, such as those of the jewellers, goldsmiths, etc. and the crafts of homeless ones, such as stitching of robes, etc.
10. Vinaya, i.e., discipline in thought, word and deed. The Commentary speaks of two kinds of discipline - the discipline of the householder, which is abstinence from the ten immoral actions and that of the homeless one, which is either the non-transgression of the seven kinds of offences,

enumerated in the *Pāṇimokkha* or the observance of the four divisions of *Sīla* (morality)

11. i.e., total abstinence and not merely temperance.
12. i.e., to Buddha, disciples, teachers, parents, elders, etc., - Comm.
13. For instance, when one is obsessed with evil thoughts. - Comm.
14. Those who have calmed their passions.
15. The eight *lokadhammas* constitute gain and loss, honour and dishonour, praise and blame, happiness and pain.
16. *Asokaṃ*, *Virajaṃ* and *Khemaṃ* - Each of these expressions refers to the mind of the Arahant, *Asoka* is freedom from sorrow. *Virajaṃ* is freedom from the stains of lust, hatred and ignorance. *Khemaṃ* is security from the bonds of sense-desires (*kāma*), becoming (*bhava*), false views (*diṭṭhi*) and ignorance (*avijjā*).
17. i.e., the above-mentioned Thirty-eight Blessings. - Comm.
18. Cp. Prof. Rhys Davids' *Buddhism*, p. 125 and Woodward's *Some Sayings of the Buddha*, p. 56.

CHAPTER XX

THE PARĀBHAVA SUTTA¹ (DOWNFALL)

THUS have I heard:-

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at the monastery of **Anāthapiṇḍika** in the **Jeta** Grove near **Sāvatthi**. Now when the night was far spent, a certain deity² whose splendour illuminated the whole **Jeta** Grove, came to the presence of the Blessed One and drawing near, respectfully saluted Him and stood on one side. Standing thus, he addressed the Blessed One in verse:-

1. “Having come to interrogate the Blessed One, we ask Thee, O **Gotama**, about the falling man. Pray, tell us the cause of one’s downfall.”
2. “Easily known is the progressive one, easily known is the declining one. A lover of the Dhamma is the progressive one, a hater of the Dhamma is the declining one.”
3. “This, then, we learn is the first cause of one’s downfall. Pray, O Blessed One, tell us the second cause of one’s downfall.”
4. “The vicious are dear to him. In the virtuous he finds nothing pleasing. He favours the creeds of the vicious - this is the cause of one’s downfall.”
5. “This, then, we learn is the second cause of one’s downfall. Pray, O Blessed One, tell us the third cause of one’s downfall.”

6. "The man who is drowsy, fond of society, not industrious, indolent and who manifests anger - this is the cause of one's downfall."

7. "This, then, we learn is the third cause of one's downfall. Pray, O Blessed One, tell us the fourth cause of one's downfall."

8. "Whosoever, being rich, does not support his aged mother and father who have passed their youth - this is the cause of one's downfall."

9. "This, then, we learn is the fourth cause of one's downfall. Pray, O Blessed One, tell us the fifth cause of one's downfall."

10. "He who, by falsehood, deceives a Brahma or an ascetic or any other mendicant - this is the cause of one's downfall."

11. "This, then, we learn is the fifth cause of one's downfall. Pray, O Blessed One, tell us the sixth cause of one's downfall."

12. "The man who owns much property, who has gold and food, but alone enjoys his delicacies - this is the cause of one's downfall."

13. "This, then, we learn is the sixth cause of one's downfall. Pray, O Blessed One, tell us the seventh cause of one's downfall."

14. "The man who takes pride in birth or wealth or clan and despises his own kinsmen - this is the cause of one's downfall."

15. "This, then, we learn is the seventh cause of one's downfall. Pray, O Blessed One, tell us the eighth cause of one's downfall."

16. "The man who is a debauchee, a drunkard, a gambler and who squanders whatever he possesses - this is the cause of one's downfall."

17. "This, then, we learn is the eighth cause of one's downfall. Pray, O Blessed One, tell us the ninth cause of one's downfall."

18. "Not contented with one's own wives, if one is seen amongst courtesans and the wives of others - this is the cause of one's downfall."

19. "This, then, we learn is the ninth cause of one's downfall. Pray, O Blessed One, tell us the tenth cause of one's downfall."

20. "The man who, past his youth, brings a very young wife and sleeps not for jealousy of her - this is the cause of one's downfall."

21. "This, then, we learn is the tenth cause of one's downfall. Pray, O Blessed One, tell us the eleventh cause of one's downfall."

22. "He who places in authority an intemperate spendthrift woman or a man of similar nature - this is the cause of one's downfall."

23. "This, then, we learn is the eleventh cause of one's downfall. Pray, O Blessed One, tell us the twelfth cause of one's downfall."

24. "He who, of warrior birth, with vast ambition, but of slender means, aspires to sovereignty - this is the cause of one's downfall."

25. "Knowing well these causes of downfall in the world, the Noble Sage, endowed with insight, shares a happy realm."

1. *Parābhava* (*parā+bhava*) means downfall.
2. The *Devās*, who were pleased with the Discourse on Blessings (the *Maṅgala Sutta*) were desirous of hearing the causes of downfall. So a *Devā* was deputed by them to interrogate the Blessed One.

CHAPTER XXI

THE METTA SUTTA¹ (LOVING-KINDNESS)

1. He who is skilled in his good and who wishes to attain that state of Calm,² should act thus:- He should be able, upright,³ perfectly upright, obedient, gentle and humble.

2. Contented, easily supportable, with few duties, of light livelihood, with senses controlled, discreet, not impudent, not be greedily attached to families.

3. He should not commit any slight wrong on account of which other wise men might censure him. May all beings be happy and secure, may their hearts be wholesome!

4. Whatever living beings there be - feeble or strong, long, stout or medium, short, small or large, seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who are born and those who are to be born - may all beings, without exception, be happy-minded!

5. Let none deceive another nor despise any person whatever in any place. In anger or ill-will let him not wish any harm to another.

6. Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so, let him cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings.

7. Let his thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world - above, below and across without any obstruction,

without any hatred, without any enmity.

8. Whether he stands, walks, sits or lies down, as long as he is awake, he should develop this mindfulness. This, they say, is the Highest Conduct here.

9. Not falling into Error,⁴ virtuous and endowed with Insight,⁵ He discards attachment to sense-desires. Of a truth, he does not come again for conception in a womb.⁶



1. As the rainy (*Vassāna*) season was drawing near, several Bhikkhus received instructions from the Buddha about meditation and went in search of a suitable place. Arriving in the course of their wanderings at a secluded and beautiful spot, they decided to stay there and meditate to gain their Deliverance.

The *Devās*, who were dwelling on the tree-tops, resented their presence; and in order to drive them away, disturbed them in their meditation at night. So the Bhikkhus, finding it difficult to concentrate in these circumstances, returned to the Buddha and told Him of their experience.

Thereupon, the Buddha taught them the *Sutta* of Loving-Kindness and advised them to go to the same spot and act accordingly.

The Bhikkhus did so and now the *Devās* were pleased at their presence as radiant thoughts of love pervaded the whole atmosphere and instead of obstructing the spiritual progress of the Bhikkhus, they gave them every possible help.

Within the *Vassāna* period itself all the Bhikkhus gained Arahantship

This Discourse serves both as a mark of protection and as a subject of meditation. In the first part of the Discourse are found virtues that should be practised by anyone who desires one's welfare; in the latter part, the method of practising Metta or goodwill is explained in detail.

***Mettā (Saṃs. Maitri).** It is difficult to give a graceful English equivalent to this term. Sometimes, it is rendered by "benevolence" which is exactly what **Mettā** signifies, but it is too flaccid a word to convey the rapture of Buddhist **Mettā**. See "The Blessing", p. 194.*

2. i.e., *Nibbāṇa*.

3. *Uju and Suju.* The first term refers to uprightness in word and deed, the second term refers to uprightness in mind. - Comm.

4. Here, error means self-illusion (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*).

5. i.e., the first glimpse of *Nibbāṇa*.

6. When one attains the stage of *Anāgāmi*, one is born in the Pure Abodes (*Suddhavāsa*) and is not born in the human realm.

CHAPTER XXII

THE VYAGGHAPAJJA SUTTA

THUS have I heard:-

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling amongst the **Koliyans**¹ in their market town named **Kakkarapatta**. Then **Dīghajānu**², a **Koliyan** son, approached the Blessed One, respectfully saluted Him and sat on one side. Thus seated, he addressed the Blessed One as follows:-

“We, Lord, are laymen who enjoy worldly pleasures. We lead a life encumbered by wife and children. We use sandalwood of **Kasi**. We deck ourselves with garlands, perfume and unguents. We suffer the use of gold and silver. To such as us, Lord, let the Blessed One preach the Doctrine, teach those things that lead to the weal and happiness in this life and to the happiness of the other world.”

CAUSES OF WORLDLY PROGRESS

“These four things, **Vyagghapajja**,³ conduce to the good and happiness of a clansman in this very life. What four?

“The achievement of persistent effort (**Uttāṇasampadā**), the achievement of wariness (**Ārakkhasampadā**), good friendship (**Kalyānamittatā**) and balanced livelihood (**Samajīvatā**).

“What is the achievement of persistent effort?

“Herein, **Vyagghapajja**, by whatsoever activity a clansman earns his living, whether by the plough, by trading, by watching cattle, by

archery, by ministering to kings or by any other kind of craft - at that he becomes skilful and is not lazy. He is endowed with reasoning as to ways and means thereof. He is able to do and manage (his job)

“This is called the achievement of persistent effort.

“What is the achievement of wariness?

“Herein, **Vyagghapajja**, whatsoever treasures a clansman is in possession of, obtained by dint of effort, collected by strength of arm, by the sweat of his brow justly acquired by right means - such the husbands by guarding and watching so that kings would not seize them, thieves would not steal, fire would not burn, water would not carry off, nor ill-disposed heirs carry away.

“This is the achievement of wariness.

“What is good friendship?

“Herein, **Vyagghapajja**, in whatsoever village or market town a clansman dwells, he stands together, converses, engages in discussions with householders of householders’ sons, whether young and highly cultured or old and highly cultured, full of faith (**Saddhā**)⁴, full of virtue (**Sīla**), full charity (**Cāga**), full of wisdom (**Paññā**). He acts in accordance with the faith of those full of faith, with the virtue of those full of virtue, with the charity of those full of charity, with the wisdom of those full of wisdom.

“This is called good company.

“What is balanced livelihood?

“Herein, **Vyagghapajja**, a clansman knowing his income and

expenses leads a steady life, being neither too extravagant nor too sordid, thinking that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income.

“Just as the goldsmith or an apprentice of his, knows, on holding up a balance, that by so much it has dipped down, by so much it has tilted up; even so a clansman, knowing his income and expenses, leads a steady life, being neither too extravagant nor too sordid, thinking that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income.

“If, **Vyagghapajja**, a clansman with little income were to lead a luxurious life, there would be those who say - ‘This clansman enjoys his wealth like one who eats wood-apple.’⁵ If, **Vyagghapajja**, a clansman with large income were to lead a wretched life, there would be those who say:- ‘This clansman will die like a starveling.’⁶

“The wealth thus amassed, **Vyagghapajja**, has four sources of destruction:-

- (i) debauchery (**Itthidhutto**), (ii) drunkenness (**Surādhutto**),
- (iii) indulgence in gambling (**Akkhadhutto**) and
- (iv) friendship, companionship and intimacy with evil-doers.

“Just as in the case of a great tank with four inlets and outlets, if a man should close the inlets and open the outlets and there should be no adequate rainfall, decrease (of water) is to be expected in that tank and not an increase; even so there are four sources for the destruction of amassed wealth - debauchery, drunkenness, indulgence in gambling and friendship, companionship and intimacy with evil-doers.

“There are four sources for the development of amassed wealth:-

- (i) abstinence from debauchery, (ii) abstinence from drunkenness,

(iii) non-indulgence in gambling and (iv) friendship, companionship and intimacy with the good.

“Just as in the case of a great tank with four inlets and four outlets, if a person were to open the inlets and close the outlets and there should also be adequate rainfall and increase of water is certainly to be expected in that tank and not a decrease; even so the four above-mentioned are the sources of development of amassed wealth. “These four things are conducive to the good and happiness of a noble son in this life itself.

CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

“These four things are conducive to the good and happiness of a noble son in the other world.

“Which four?

(i) Achievement of Faith (**Saddhāsampadā**), (ii) Achievement of Virtue (**Sīlasampadā**), (iii) Achievement of Charity (**Cāgasampadā**), (iv) Achievement of Wisdom (**Paññāsampadā**).

“What is the achievement of faith?

“Herein a clansman is possessed of faith, believes in the Enlightenment of the **Tathāgata**:- Thus, indeed, is that Blessed One, an Exalted One, Omniscient, Endowed with wisdom and conduct, Auspicious Knower of worlds, an Incomparable Charioteer for the training of individuals, Teacher of gods and men, Enlightened and Holy.

“This is called the achievement of faith.

“What is the achievement of virtue?

“Herein a clansman abstains from killing, stealing, unchastity, lying and intoxicants that cause infatuation and heedlessness.

“This is called the achievement of virtue.

“What is the achievement of charity?

“Herein a clansman dwells at home with heart free from the stain of avarice, devoted to charity, open-handed, delighting in generosity, fit to be asked (for alms) rejoicing in sharing alms.

“This is called the achievement of charity.

“What is the achievement of wisdom?

“Herein a clansman is wise, is endowed with wisdom that leads to one’s development and with noble penetrative insight (**Nibbedikāya**) that leads to the complete destruction of suffering.

“This is called the achievement of wisdom.

“These four things are conducive to the good and happiness of a clansman in the other world.

“Strenuous in spheres of work, heedful and ordering, he lives well, protecting what he has amassed.

“Endowed with faith and virtue, generous, free from avarice, he ever clears the path of happiness to the other world.

“Thus for the believing home-seekers, these eight things that lead

to the happiness in both worlds - well-being in this and happiness in the other - have been declared by Him who owns a truthful name.

“In this way do the charity and merit of laymen grow.”

* * * * *

1. The **Koliyans** were the rivals of the **Sākya**s. Queen **Mahā Māyā** belonged to the **Koliyan** clan and King **Suddhodana** to the **Sākya**n clan. The **Koliyan** capital was at **Rāmagāma**, about 40 miles east of **Kapilavatthu**.
2. Literally, long-knee.
3. So called because his ancestors were born on a forest path infested with tigers. **Vyagghapajja** was **Dighajānu**’s family name.
4. **Saddhā** is not blind faith. It is confidence based on knowledge.
5. **Udumbarakhādakaṃ**. The Commentary explains that one who wishes to eat wood-apple shakes the tree, with the result that many fruits fall, but only a few are eaten, whilst a large number is wasted.
6. **Ajaddhumārika - Anāthamarāṇa** (Comm.)

QUESTIONS

CHAPTER I

1. When was Prince **Siddhattha** born?
What is the difference between the Buddhist Era and the Christian Era?
2. Give a brief account of the life of Prince **Siddhattha**.
3. Mention the chief events connected with the youth of the Prince.
4. What led to the renunciation of Prince **Siddhattha**?
5. Describe briefly his struggle for Enlightenment.
6. What is the difference between a **Bodhisatta** and a Buddha?
7. Mention the three kinds of knowledge developed by the Buddha on the day of His Enlightenment.
8. "The Buddha was neither a saviour nor an incarnation of **Vishnu**." Comment on this.
9. Was the Buddha a God? Give reasons.
10. "There was none so god-like and so godless as the Buddha." Explain this.
11. "We are all potential Buddhas." Comment on this.
12. Do Buddhists pray to the Buddha to be saved?

13. How did the Buddha serve the world after His Enlightenment?

14. Write notes on:-

i. **Sākyas**, ii. **Asita**, iii. **Koṇḍañña**, iv. Four Sights, v. **Sujatā**, vi. **Uddaka Rāmaputta**, vii. **Māra**, viii. **Māra's** army.

CHAPTER II

1. What was the paean of joy the Buddha uttered soon after His Enlightenment?
What could you infer from this utterance?
2. How did the Buddha spend the first week after His Enlightenment?
3. What was the first moral lesson the Buddha indirectly taught humanity?
4. How does one become a Brahman according to the Word of the Buddha?
5. Who were the three daughters of **Māra**? Could they be passions? Give reasons.
6. What can you say about the sixth week?
7. Give a short account of His first two Converts.
8. What is your opinion about the non-human beings that appear in this chapter?
Who were they?

9. How does one formally become a Buddhist? Are there any special ceremonies?
10. Write notes on the following:-
 - i) **Mucalinda**, (ii) **Bodhi-tree**, (iii) **Ratana Cankamana**, (iv) **Ratanāghāra**.

CHAPTER III

1. Who invited the Buddha to teach and why?
2. Why was the Buddha reluctant at first to teach the Dhamma though He attained Buddhahood for that very purpose?
3. What was the Buddha's reply to **Brahma Sahampati**?
4. "No teacher have I." Comment on this.
5. Relate the conversation that took place between the Buddha and **Upaka**.
6. Give a brief account of the first Five Monks.
7. Write notes on the following:-
 - (i) **Brahma Sahampati**, (ii) **Ālara Kālāma**, (iii) **Uddaka Rāmaputta**, (iv) **Āvuso**, (v) **Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta**.

CHAPTER IV

1. Explain the meaning of "**Dhammacakka**".

2. What inferences could you draw from the **Dhammacakka Sutta**?
3. What are the two extremes that should be avoided and why?
4. Describe the Golden Mean discovered by the Buddha.
5. Give reasons for stating that the Noble Eightfold Path is exclusively Buddhist.
6. Is it necessary to become a Buddhist to follow the Noble Eightfold Path? Give reasons.
7. Explain the Four Noble Truths.
8. Prove that Buddhism is not based on unreasonable belief but on verifiable facts.
9. "Buddhism rests on the pivot of sorrow. Therefore Buddhism is a pessimistic religion." Refute this.
10. How would you account for the problem of suffering?
11. Prove that the world rests on sorrow.
12. Has the second Noble Truth any significance to modern life? Explain.
13. What are the functions of the Four Noble Truths?
14. What are the three kinds of craving?
15. Could ultimate Peace be obtained in this present life and how?

16. Describe the 12 modes of the Four Noble Truths.
17. What happened at the close of this Discourse?
18. Prove from this Discourse that Buddhism is a moral and philosophical teaching.
19. Craving is a powerful evil force. What good forces have you to summon to subdue this single evil force?
20. Prove from this Discourse that the Buddha expounded the Doctrine of rebirth.

CHAPTER V

1. Why did **Yasa** renounce the world? How did he attain Arahantship?
2. Who were the Buddha's first **Upāsaka** and **Upāsika**?
3. "The Buddha was the First Missioner in the world." Support this statement.
4. Who were the first sixty Arahants?
5. What was the Buddha's exhortation to the first Buddhist missionaries?
6. "Seeking oneself is better than seeking others." Comment on this.
7. What is **Dhammacakkhu**?

8. Give a brief account of the first three ascetics converted by the Buddha.
9. Who was King **Bimbisāra** and what service did he render to the **Sāsana**?
10. Describe the conversion of **Sāriputta** and **Moggallāna**.
11. Summarise the Buddha's Teaching in a few words.
12. Write notes on the following:-
 - (i) **Ajātasattu**, (ii) **Mahā Nārada Kassapa Jātaka**, (iii) **Veluvanārāma**, (iv) **Sanjaya**.

CHAPTER VI

1. Describe the Buddha's visit to **Kapilavatthu**.
2. How did the Buddha convert His relatives?
3. Give a brief account of the conversion of King **Suddhodana**.
4. "The Buddha was not a proud aristocrat but a humble mendicant." Comment on this.
5. Describe the Buddha's meeting with **Yasodharā**.
6. Who was **Nanda** and how was he converted?
7. Give a brief account of the life of **Rāhula**.
8. Who was the Venerable **Ānanda**? What special service did he render to women?

9. "Even the Buddha had to face opposition." Comment on this.
10. Does Buddhism advocate vegetarianism or not?

CHAPTER VII

1. Give a brief account of the Order of Nuns.
2. What is **Yamaka Pāṭihāriya**? Where did the Buddha exhibit this psychic phenomenon?
3. How did the Buddha pay His gratitude to His mother?
4. Give a brief account of the life of **Angulimāla**. What lessons do you infer from his life?
5. In whose monastery did the Buddha spend the major part of His life? Give a brief account of his life.
6. What can you say of the chief benefactress of the Buddha? Why is she regarded as an ideal Buddhist Lady?
7. Write notes on the following:
(i) **Tāvātimsā Heaven**, (ii) **Abhidhamma**, (iii) **Māgandiyā**,
(iv) **Verañjā**, (v) **Pubbārāma**, (vi) **Jetavana**.

CHAPTER VIII

1. How did the Buddha spend the forenoon sessions?
2. How many hours a day did the Buddha sleep?
How many hours a day did the Buddha preach?

3. In what respects does the Buddha excel other religious teachers?
4. Buddhism appeals more to the intellect than to emotion.”
Comment on this.
5. How did the Buddha spend the last watch?

CHAPTER IX

1. The Buddha was a compassionate and tolerant teacher.”
Illustrate this.
2. Do you believe that the Buddha was Omniscient? Give reasons.
3. Give an illustration to show that the Buddha did not preach all that He knew.
4. What is the attitude of Buddhism towards caste and nationalism?
5. “The Buddha raised the status of women.” Comment on this.
6. “Animals were created for the use of man.” Does Buddhism support this statement?
7. What factors have contributed to hail the Buddha as the Greatest religious teacher?

CHAPTER X

1. What did the Buddha say with regard to the four Paths of Accomplishment (**Iddhipāda**)?

2. What part does “**Māra**” play in Buddhism?
3. What was the Buddha’s exhortation to all His disciples? What were His last words?
4. “He who sees the Dhamma sees me.” Comment on this.
5. What was the Buddha’s last meal? Give reasons for your answer.
6. “The Buddha served humanity up to the last moment.” Describe.
7. “The Noble Eightfold Path is found only in Buddhism.” Explain this.
8. “All religions lead to the same goal.” Refute this.
9. Whom did the Buddha appoint as His successor? Give reasons for His attitude.
10. Describe the last moment of the Buddha.
11. “As a man He was born. As an extraordinary man He lived. As a Buddha He passed away.” Comment on this.
12. Write notes on the following:-
 - (i) Venerable **Dhammārāma**, (ii) **Cunda**, (iii) **Subhadda**,
(iv) the Four **Samanas**, (v) **Jhāna**.

CHAPTER XI

1. What is **Kamma**? What is **Vipāka**?

2. “**Kamma** is a law in itself.” Explain this.
3. Does **Kamma** correspond to fate?
4. Explain the difference between **Kamma** and pre-destination.
5. What does **Kamma** explain?
6. “You are your own creator.” Comment on this.
7. How does the belief in **Kamma** affect one’s life?
8. “You are born poor on account of your bad **Kamma**. Do good now to be born rich in your next life.” Comment on this.
9. How far does **Kamma** act as a corrective to man?
10. “Everything is due to **Kamma**.” Refute this.
11. Where is **Kamma**?
12. Explain the five **Niyāmas**.
13. If there is no soul, who reaps the effects of **Kamma**?
14. Write short notes on the different kinds of **Kamma**
15. “The doctrine of **Kamma** is detrimental to the progress of a nation.” Refute this.
16. Mention the ten kinds of **Kusala Kamma**.
17. Describe briefly the ten kinds of evil.

18. Is it wrong to break a fertilized egg? Give reasons?
19. Is transference of merit a **Kusala Kamma**? Explain how the departed benefit thereby.
20. What are the conditions necessary to complete the evil of killing?
21. Do you abet killing in buying flesh from a meat stall? Give reasons for your answer.
22. Is an action assessed by the motive or by the effect?

CHAPTER XII

1. Explain the difference between rebirth and reincarnation or transmigration.
2. Give your reasons for believing in rebirth.
3. Describe briefly the wheel of life.
4. What are the four modes of birth?
5. How do you account for the unexpected deaths of children?
6. What are the blissful states of existence?
7. How does rebirth take place?
8. If there is no soul, what is it that is reborn? Explain.
9. “**Na ca so na ca añño** - Neither the same nor another.” Explain.

10. What do you mean by **Pañcakkhandha**?

CHAPTER XIII

1. What is truth?
2. Are the Four Truths dependent or independent of man?
3. Explain the first Noble Truth. Has it any relation to life?
4. What are the **Lokiya** and **Lokuttara** Truths?
5. Is Buddhism a philosophy, a religion or an ethical system?

CHAPTER XIV

1. What is the meaning of the term **Nibbāṇa**?
2. Is **Nibbāṇa** nothingness?
3. "There is no difference between the Buddhist **Nibbāṇa** and the Christian Heaven." Refute this.
4. What is **Sopādisesa Nibbāṇa Dhātu**?
5. Is **Nibbāṇa** attainable in this life itself? Could one realize **Nibbāṇa** today?
6. "**Nibbāṇa** is supreme bliss." Explain
7. Explain the difference between **Sankhata** and **Asankhata**.
8. Where is **Nibbāṇa**?

9. What attains **Nibbāṇa**?

10. Is **Nibbāṇa** a state or a place?

CHAPTER XV

1. Give in **Pāli** the Noble Eightfold Path.
2. Prove that Buddhism is not based on unreasoning belief.
3. What are Right Thoughts?
4. What is Right Effort?
5. What are the five kinds of prohibited trades?
6. How do you classify the eight factors into three?
7. Give a verse in **Pāli** which embodies the advice of all the Buddhas.
8. Give a brief description of the first stage that leads to **Nibbāṇa**.
9. Is it necessary to enter the Order to attain **Nibbāṇa**?
10. What are the Ten Precepts?
11. What are the five kinds of supernormal knowledge?
12. What is **Vipassanā**?
13. Explain the Three Characteristics (**Tilakkhaṇa**).

14. Describe briefly the four stages of Sainthood.
15. What are the ten Fetters?
16. How are these Fetters eradicated at different stages?

CHAPTER XVI

1. Explain the meaning of the term **Nīvarana**.
2. Which Hindrance is the most difficult to be eradicated and why?
3. What is the Buddhist attitude towards repentance?
4. What is **Vicikicchā**?
5. Mention the five kinds of Hindrances and explain how they are inhibited and eradicated.

CHAPTER XVII

1. Why was a Council held immediately after the passing away of the Buddha?
2. Where and on what date was the First Council held? Who acted as the leading **Therās** and why?
3. What is **Tipitaka**?
4. Mention the names of five **Nikāyas**.

5. Give in **Pāli** the names of the 31 books that comprise the **Tipitaka**.
6. Mention some of the causes that led to the holding of the Second Council.
7. Mention the names of the leading **Therās** who participated in the Second Council.
8. Who were the chief personages that participated in the Third Council.
9. When was the Third Council held and why?
10. Has the Third Council any special significance?

CHAPTER XVIII

1. Give a brief account of the life of **Asoka**.
2. Who converted **Asoka** to Buddhism and how?
3. How did **Asoka** serve humanity?
4. Disprove that Buddhism was the cause of the downfall of India.
5. Which characteristics of **Asoka** appeal to you most?
6. Mention the names of the places where **Asoka**'s Missioners visited.
7. Which of the missions was the most successful and why?

8. Which country preserved the Teachings of the Buddha and how?

CHAPTER XIX

1. Why did the Buddha preach the **Mangala Sutta**?
2. Give the meaning of the term **Mangala**.
3. "Buddhism is an other-worldly religion." Refute this with quotations from the **Mangala Sutta**.
4. Which particular **Mangalas** contribute to the welfare of a state and why?
5. What **Mangalas** appeal particularly to children? Give reasons.

CHAPTER XX

1. What is **Parābhava** and what led to the preaching of this **Sutta**.
2. Mention the chief causes that led to the downfall of a boy or a girl.
3. Mention the chief causes that led to the downfall of a man or a woman.
4. Which, in your opinion, are the four chief causes that ruin mankind today?

CHAPTER XXI

1. What is the difference between **Metta** and ordinary love?

2. Mention the virtues that should be practised by a skilful person as stated in the **Metta Sutta**.
3. What is the criterion of morality according to the **Metta Sutta**? Comment on it.
4. Describe how **Metta** should be practised.
5. "A Buddhist is a citizen of the world." Support this statement.

CHAPTER XXII

1. Give reasons to show that Buddhism is not an other-worldly religion.
2. What are the four causes that lead to worldly progress?
3. Of these four causes, which is the most important for a boy or a girl?
4. What are the four causes that lead to one's progress?
5. Mention the four causes that lead to one's spiritual progress.
6. Give in Pali and English the nine virtues of the Buddha.
7. What is the achievement of virtue?
8. Write notes on the following:-
(i) **Vyagghapajja**, (ii) **Saddhā**, (iii) **Udumbarakhādakaṃ**,
(iv) **Ajaddhumārika**.



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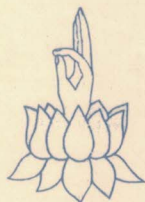
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